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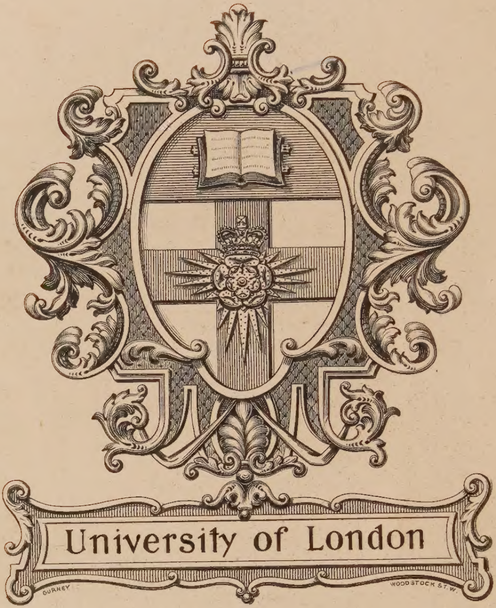
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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

AUTHORISED EDITION.

FOURTH SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

57 VICTORIÆ.

VOLUME XXIII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
THE TENTH DAY OF APRIL
TO
THE THIRTIETH DAY OF APRIL,
1894.

EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE,
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(UNDER CONTRACT WITH H.M. GOVERNMENT).

1894.

29'27

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L. Chancellor.
E. Morley.
E. Kimberley.
L. Watson.
L. Halsbury.
L. Thring.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

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Advertisement Regulation Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Boulnois, Sir E. Clarke, Mr. Caine, Mr. Darling, Mr. Benson, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Smith-Barry, Mr. Vicary Gibbs* :) —Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 153.]

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Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented Three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

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MOTIONS.

—o—

Public Trustee and Executor Bill—*Ordered* (*Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Warmington:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 154.]

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The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Baird, Mr. J. B. Balfour, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Dalziel, Captain Hope, Sir John Kinloch, Dr. MacGregor, Mr. Maxwell, Sir Charles Pearson, Mr. Renshaw, Mr. Thomas Shaw, Mr. G. A. L. Whitelaw, and Mr. Stephen Williamson.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

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Plumbers' Registration Bill (No. 84)—

Order for Second Reading read 305

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Lees Knowles.*)

After short Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday next.

LAND ACTS (IRELAND)—Motion for a Select Committee—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable,"—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Objection being taken to the Motion, and it being after Midnight, Debate adjourned.

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Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill (No. 6)—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow 306

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &c.—

"That they have appointed a Committee of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of this House, to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session; and request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) [ADVANCE]—Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the fund of the suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland under any Act of the present Session to authorise an advance out of the general fund of monies belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the Library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin."

Resolution *agreed to.*

Land Tenure (Ireland) Bill (No. 7)—Considered in Committee.
Clause 1. Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Solicitors' Examination Bill (No. 112)—Considered in Committee.
Clause 2. Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Building Societies (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered (Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. George Russell:)*—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 157.] ... 307

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE IRISH LAND ACTS—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

Observations on the delay in appointing the Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Acts (Mr. T. M. Healy).

After Debate, Motion *agreed to* 312

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STANDING COMMITTEE—*Ordered*, That a Standing Committee be appointed for the consideration of such Public Bills as may be committed to it by the House 320

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE—*Appointed.*

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL—

Commons Message considered (according to Order): *Moved*, That this House do concur in the following Resolution communicated by the Commons—namely, that it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons (*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to.

Then it was further moved to resolve that it is expedient that the said Committee be the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills (*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith.

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MOTIONS.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION — Major Rasch, Member for South East Essex, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, "the neglect of the Government to take measures for the relief of Agricultural Depression during the present Session;" but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen,

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Major Rasch*) 346

After Debate, The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put" 367

Statement—in assenting to the Motion—Mr. Speaker.

Motion *agreed to*:—Question put accordingly, "That this House do now adjourn:"—The House divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 208.—(Division List, No. 24.)

Period of Qualification and Elections Bill—Motion for leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to reduce the Period of Qualification for Parliamentary and Local Government Electors, and to provide for the half-yearly registration of such electors, and to provide for taking the polls at a Parliamentary General Election on one day, and to restrict plural voting at Parliamentary Elections, and for purposes consequential thereon,"—(*Mr. J. Morley*) 368

After Debate, Motion *agreed to* 396

Bill ordered (*Mr. J. Morley, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Mr. Dyke Acland*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 161.]

SUPPLY—Report—

Resolutions [12th April] reported.—[See p. 226.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

Resolutions read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the first Resolution."

After short Debate, it being ten minutes before Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this day 397

LAND ACTS (IRELAND)—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed 'to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable,' "—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Objection being taken to Further Proceedings, Motion postponed.

The House suspended its Sitting at five minutes before Seven of the clock 398

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY—Committee—Order for Committee read—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

SMALL HOLDINGS (IRELAND)—RESOLUTION—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"In the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland, and that, while the same machinery or councils used in England are not in use in Ireland, such existing machinery as Poor Law Boards or other public bodies or Government Departments should be used for the purpose,"—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question." 403

After Debate, Question put, and negatived 424

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

After short Debate, words amended, by leaving out from the words "to Ireland," to the end of the Question.

Words, as amended, added 425

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland.

Solicitors Ireland Bill (No. 108)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Field*) 426

After short Debate, Question put, and negatived.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill (No. 6)—Read the third time, and passed.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill (No. 147)—Read a second time, and committed.

Wemyss, &c., Water Provisional Order Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, The Solicitor General for Scotland*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 158.]

Franchise (England and Wales) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Barrow, Mr. Samuel Montagu, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Howell, Mr. Stewart Wallace, Mr. Benn*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 159.]

Leasehold Property Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Field, Mr. Clancy, Dr. Kenny*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 160.] 426

Solicitors' Examination Bill (No. 112)—Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

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SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES)—TRADE, &c.—Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Sir John Lubbock; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Heneage.

Ordered, That the Report do lie upon the Table.

SUPPLY [12th April]—Report—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [this day],

"That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That a sum, not exceeding £1,771,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of the *Personnel* for Shipbuilding, Repairs, and Maintenance, including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895.'"

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Subsequent Resolutions *agreed to.*

Irish Education Act (1892) Amendment Bill (No. 107)—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put, and negatived.

Public Buildings (London) Bill (No. 79)—Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

ADJOURNMENT—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn," —(*Mr. T. E. Ellis*) 428

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE CONDITION OF THE SILK TRADE—RESOLUTION—Observations, Mr. Bromley-Davenport, Mr. Wingfield-Digby.

Motion *agreed to.*

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REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND — Viscount Ferrard; Viscount Charlemont; Lord Clonbrock (Claim to Vote for Representative Peers for Ireland) 429

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SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT LUCCOMBE AND STOKE-PERO—Motion for a Return 431

Moved, "That there be laid before this House Return of all schools in which alterations have been required by the Education Department since the Vice President came into Office in 1892,"—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

After Debate, on Question, resolved in the negative 442

BEHAR CADASTRAL SURVEY—Question and Observations, Lord Stanley of Alderley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Lord Reay) 443

Limitation of Actions Bill (No. 13)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read 444

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House 446

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS—BETTERMENT—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That it is desirable that a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report whether, in the case of improvements sanctioned by Parliament and effected by the expenditure of public funds, persons, the value of whose property is clearly increased by an improvement, can be equitably required to contribute to the costs of the improvements; and, if so, in what cases and under what conditions Parliament should sanction the levying of such contributions in Local Acts or Provisional Orders,"—(*The Chairman of Committees.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to* 448

Behring Sea Award Bill (No. 15)—

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.—Verbal Amendments.

Clause 2 *agreed to.*

Clause 3.

Amendment moved, in page 3, line 8, after ("thereof") insert—

("Or such of those powers as appear to Her Majesty in Council to be exerciseable under the law of the United States of America against ships of the United States,")—(*The Earl of Kimberley.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 4.—Formal Amendment.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 *agreed to.*

Clause 7.—Verbal and drafting Amendments.

Clause 8 *agreed to.*

Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received To-morrow; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered in order to its being dispensed with; and Bill to be printed, as amended. (No. 22.)

Trustee Act (1893) Amendment Bill (No. 20)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Ashbourne*) ... 449

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

MARKING OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report whether legislation for the purpose of requiring the foreign or colonial origin of imported agricultural and horticultural produce—and especially meat, cheese, and fruit—to be marked thereon or otherwise indicated, is necessary, expedient, and feasible; and, if so, what are the provisions which such legislation should comprise."

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to.*

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Quarter Sessions (Midsummer) Bill [H.L.] **(No. 4)** *now* **Quarter Sessions Bill** [H.L.]—Read 3ª (according to Order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

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House of Lords Offices Committee—The Lord Privy Seal added to the Select Committee.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 23.)

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 16.

QUESTIONS.

Official Publications—Questions, Colonel Howard Vincent; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).

Canadian Tea Duties—Questions, Mr. Howard, Sir R. Hanson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton) ... 455

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The Behring Sea Question—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. S. Buxton) 460

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Irish Education Act, 1892—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

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Merchant Shipping—Question, Sir G. Baden-Powell; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).

Arran Islands—Questions, Mr. Sheehy, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

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THE BUDGET.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Tea.

"That the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):—
Tea - - the pound - - Four Pence,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After long Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* 553

Tea.

1. *Resolved*, That the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four; until the first day of August one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):—
Tea - - the pound - - Four Pence,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Customs Duty on Beer.

2. *Resolved*, That in lieu of the Duty of Customs now payable on Beer of the descriptions called or similar to Mum, Spruce, Black Beer, or Berlin White Beer, there shall be charged and paid the Duties following (that is to say):—

	£	s.	d.
For every thirty-six gallons of Beer—			
Where the worts thereof are or were before fermentation of a specific gravity—			
Not exceeding one thousand two hundred and fifteen degrees - - -	1	8	0
Exceeding one thousand two hundred and fifteen degrees - - - -	1	12	10
And, in addition to the Duty of Customs now payable on every other description of Beer there shall be charged and paid—			
For every thirty-six gallons where the worts thereof were before fermentation of a specific gravity of one thousand and fifty-five degrees - - - -	0	0	6

And so in proportion for any difference in gravity,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Excise Duty on Beer.

3. *Resolved*, That in addition to the Duty of Excise now payable in respect of Beer brewed in the United Kingdom there shall be charged and paid—
For every thirty-six gallons of worts of a specific gravity of one thousand and fifty-five degrees the Duty of Six Pence,
And so in proportion for any difference in quantity or gravity,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Customs Duty on Spirits.

4. *Resolved*, That, in addition to the Duties of Customs now payable on Spirits, there shall be charged and paid the Duties following (that is to say):—

	£	s.	d.
For every gallon computed at proof of spirits of any description except Perfumed Spirits - - - - - - - - - - - -	0	0	6
For every gallon of Perfumed Spirits - - - - - - - - -	0	0	10
For every gallon of Liqueurs, Cordials, mixtures, and other preparations entered in such a manner as to indicate that the strength is not to be tested	0	0	8

WAYS AND MEANS—*continued*

And the Duties of Customs on the articles hereinafter mentioned, being articles of which Spirits are a part or ingredient, shall be proportionately increased, and shall be as follows:—

		£	s.	d.
Chloral Hydrate - - - - - - - -	the pound	0	1	4
Chloroform - - - - - - - - -	the pound	0	3	3
Collodion - - - - - - - - -	the gallon	1	6	3
Ether Acetic - - - - - - - - -	the pound	0	1	11
Ether Butyric - - - - - - - - -	the gallon	0	16	5
Ether Sulphuric - - - - - - - -	the gallon	1	7	5
Ethyl, Iodide of - - - - - - - -	the gallon	0	14	3

—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Excise Duty on Spirits.

4. *Resolved*, That in addition to the Duty of Excise now payable for every gallon computed at proof of Spirits distilled in the United Kingdom there shall be charged and paid the Duty of Six Pence, and so in proportion for any less quantity,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 554

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again upon Wednesday.

Army (Annual) Bill (No. 16)—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 23, after the word "shall," to insert the words "subject to the appointment of a Judge Advocate General,"—(*Mr. Hanbury*) 555

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

After short Debate, Question put, and *negatived* 557

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 28, to leave out the word "April," and insert the word "May,"—(*Mr. Hanbury*) 558

Question proposed, "That the word 'April' stand part of the Clause."

After short Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* 562

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

After Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* 567

Clause 3.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

After Debate, Question put:—The Committee divided:—Ayes 151; Noes 20.—(Division List, No. 25) 572

Clauses 4 and 5 *agreed to.*

Clause 6.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill" 573

After Debate, Clause *agreed to* 577

Clause 7 *agreed to.*

New Clause:—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 6, sub-section (1).)

"In sub-section one, paragraph (k), of section six of the Army Act, the words 'if an officer to be cashiered or to suffer such less punishment as is in this Act mentioned, and if a soldier shall be omitted,"—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles.*)

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Army (*Annual*) *Bill*—continued

Clause brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

After short Debate, Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause :—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 47, sub-section (6).)

"In sub-section six of section forty-six of the Army Act, for the words 'the accused person may demand that the evidence against him should be taken on oath' shall be substituted the words 'the evidence against him shall be taken on oath,'"—(*Mr. Hanbury*) 578

Clause brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

After short Debate, Motion negatived 579

New Clause :—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 48, sub-section (6).)

"In sub-section six of section forty-eight of the Army Act, after the words 'penal servitude' shall be inserted the words 'or imprisonment for more than twelve months,'"—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Clause brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time" 580

After short Debate, Clause, by leave, withdrawn 581

Amendment proposed, in Sub-section 1, Section 2, of the principal Act, to insert the word "military" before the word "prison,"—(*Mr. Arnold-Forster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'military' be there inserted."

After short Debate, Question put, and *negatived* 583

New Clause :—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 180, sub-section (2).)

"In sub-section two of section one hundred and eighty of the Army Act, the words 'being natives of India' shall be omitted,"—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Clause brought up, and read the first time 584

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

After short Debate, Clause, by leave, withdrawn 585

Bill reported, without Amendment ; read the third time, and passed.

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill (No. 131)—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Amendment moved, in page 2, line 15, after "King's Inn," to insert "and the Judges of the Supreme Court,"—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

After short Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh*) 578

Law Library, Four Courts (*Ireland*) *Bill*—continued

After short Debate, Motion (*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh*), by leave, withdrawn ... 588

Amendment (*Mr. J. Morley*) *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday.

Religious Tests (Ireland) Bill (No. 48)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh.*)

Objection being taken, Second Reading deferred till To-morrow ... 589

LAND ACTS (IRELAND)—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed 'to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable,' "—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

After Observations, Motion *agreed to* 590

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act for amending the Law with respect to the Time for Holding Midsummer Quarter Sessions." [Quarter Sessions (Midsummer) Bill [*Lords*].]

Quarter Sessions (Midsummer) Bill [*Lords*]—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 162.]

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &c.—Lords Message [12th April] relative to the appointment of a Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, &c., considered.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Six Members be appointed to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords (as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of the 12th April), to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Committee nominated of,—Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Bryce, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Howell, and The Solicitor General.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL,—That they do concur with this House in their Resolution "That it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons," as desired by this House; and have further Resolved, That it is expedient that the said Committee be the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills.

Lords Message to be considered forthwith.

Resolved, That this House doth concur with the Lords in their further Resolution.

Ordered, That the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith. —(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

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Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent from the Scheme for the administration of the funds applicable to the intermediate and technical education of the inhabitants of the County of Anglesey,"—(*The Lord Bishop of Bangor.*)

After short Debate, on Question, Resolved in the Negative 598

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS, AND WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT, 1889 (SCHEME FOR THE COUNTY OF FLINT)—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent to the following portion of the Flintshire Education Scheme: Clause 93, Sub-section (*b*), from the word 'boarding house' to the end, and the whole of Sub-section (*c*),"—(*The Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.*)

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Ordered, That the said Address be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS—Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have appointed a Select Committee of Six Members to join with the Select Committee appointed by this House, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of Thursday last, to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session.

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Behring Sea Award Bill—Amendments reported (according to Order): Then Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order) and dispensed with; Bill read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

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Privilege—The Blocking of the Voluntary Conveyances Bill—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to Inquire and Report to this House whether any, and, if so, what, persons have been guilty of a breach of the Privileges of this House in reference to the blocking of the Voluntary Conveyances Bill on 31st of May, 1893, and that any two or more Members of such Committee have power to examine any witnesses who are incapacitated by sickness from attending personally to be examined by such Committee,"—(*Mr. Pritchard-Morgan*) 638

After short Debate, Question put, and *negatived* 648

Sittings of the House (Exemption from the Standing Order)—

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Motion for the appointment of a Standing Committee on Scotch Bills, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House,—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Standing Committee (Scotland)—Resolution—[Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [2nd April], ...

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)—*cont.*

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee:

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged:

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee,"—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

And which Amendment was to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom,"—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question again proposed,

"That the words 'in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47' stand part of the Question."

After long Debate, Question put:—The House divided:—Ayes 252; Noes 219.—(Division List, No. 26) 740

Main Question again proposed—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Goschen.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to* 741

Debate adjourned till Friday, at Two of the clock.

Behring Sea Award Bill—Lords' Amendments considered forthwith, and *agreed to*.

MOTIONS.

EDUCATION CODE, 1894—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her to direct that the New Education Code of 1894 be amended in the following particulars:—

Page 1, Art. 3 (a), leave out 'For the purposes of this Code the Department have power to decide whether a part of a School is or is not a Department.'

Page 3, Art. 12 (e), leave out 'A meeting of two hours or more must include an interval for recreation of not less than 10 minutes.'

Page 9, Art. 52, line 1, after 'first' insert 'or second.'

Page 15, Art. 85 (a) N.B., leave out 'is,' and insert 'has been,' in last paragraph.

Page 15, Art. 85 (b), leave out '(which after 31st August, 1896, must not be needlework).'

Page 16, Art. 88, leave out 'or any danger to health likely to arise from the condition of the school.'

Page 20, Art. 101 (b), (1), leave out 'Swedish or other drill or,'"—(*Sir R. Temple.*)

After Debate, Question put, and *negatived* 745

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill (No. 148)—Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (No. 149)—Read a second time, and committed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill (No. 150)—Read a second time, and committed.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES), LAW, &c.:—Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure:—Mr. Samuel Hoare and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Boulnois and Mr. Billson.

Report to lie upon the Table 746

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—That they have *agreed to* — Behring Sea Award Bill, with Amendments.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 97)—Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Wild Birds Protection Act (1880) Amendment Bill (No. 134)—

Second Reading. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [11th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

COMMONS—

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider every Report made by the Board of Agriculture, certifying the expediency of any Provisional Order for the enclosure or regulation of a Common, and presented to the House during the last or present Sessions, before a Bill be brought in for the confirmation of such Order.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power in respect of each such Provisional Order, to inquire and Report to the House whether the same should be confirmed by Parliament; and, if so, whether with or without modification, and, in the event of their being of opinion that the same should not be confirmed, except subject to modifications, to report such modifications accordingly with a view to such Provisional Order remitted to the Board of Agriculture.

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Twelve Members, Seven to be nominated by the House, and Five by the Committee of Selection:

Dr. Ambrose, Viscount Curzon, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Thomas Robinson, and Mr. Taylor were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum,"—(*Mr. H. Gardner.*)

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 163] 747

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 164.]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 5) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. J. Morley, Sir J. T. Hibbert*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 165.]

Universities Representation Abolition Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Charles Roundell, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. Roby, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Gully, Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Paul*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 166.]

House of Lords Veto (Abolition) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. E. J. C. Morton, Mr. Arch, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. T. D. Sullivan*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 167.]

County Councillors (Qualification of Women) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Spicer, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Walter M'Laren, Mr. Macdonald, Sir Stafford Northcote*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 168.]

Mussel Scalps (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Birkmyre, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Wason, Mr. Harry Smith, Mr. Crombie*:) — Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 169] 748

Public Libraries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Field, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Clancy, Mr. William Johnston, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Carson*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 170.]

Public Libraries (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Renshaw*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 171.]

Poor Law Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Lambert, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Billson, Mr. Luttrell*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 172.]

WAYS AND MEANS—Resolutions [16th April] reported—[See page 553.]

Resolutions *agreed to.*

Bill ordered (*Mr. Mellor, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Dispensary Committees (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. Crean, Mr. Bodkin, Mr. Tully, Mr. M'Cartan*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 173.]

And, it being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) Repeal Bill (No. 8)—

Order for Second Reading read 749

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Barton*) 758

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question" ... 768

After long Debate, Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put" 810

Question put, "That the Question be now put":—The House divided:—Ayes 255; Noes 196.—(Division List, No. 27.)

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question":—The House divided:—Ayes 254; Noes 194.—(Division List, No. 28.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and committed for Friday, at Two of the clock.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill (No. 148)—Read a second time, and committed.

Industrial and Provident Societies Act (1893) Amendment Bill (No. 96)—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed 811

Music and Dancing Licences (Middlesex) Bill (No. 26)—Considered in Committee. Clause 1. Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 97)—As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

Fishery Board (Scotland) Extension of Powers Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Asher, Mr. Anstruther, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Renshaw, Sir William Wedderburn*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 174.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour; Answer, Mr. T. E. Ellis 812

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THE "COSTA RICA PACKET"—Petition presented:—Observations, The Earl of Jersey; Answer, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Kimberley) 813

Army (Annual) Bill (No. 24)—

Second Reading 816

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

Observations, Viscount Cross 817

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly; then Standing Order No. XXXIX considered (according to Order), and dispensed with; Bill read 3^a, and passed.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Procedure) Bill (No. 3)—

Committee.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.

Amendment moved, in line 10, to leave out the words "of a Judge,"—(*The Lord Halsbury.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Remaining clauses *agreed to.*

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee; and to be printed, as amended. (No. 26) 818

EDUCATION CODE, 1894—RESOLUTION—

Moved to resolve, "That, in the opinion of this House, the following paragraphs of Article 73, viz.:—'In order that a school may be properly organised, the number of children on the registers under the control of any teacher or teachers should not exceed by more than 15 per cent. the number for which such teacher or teachers is or are considered to be sufficient. In the case of schools to which the grant falls due on or after 31st August, 1896, the above numbers will be reduced as follows: 60 to 50, 70 to 60, and 50 to 45,' should be omitted from the Code,"—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

After short Debate, Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

Behring Sea Award Bill—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 27.) ... ...

Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, Amendment Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 28.)

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THE CRIMES ACT REPEAL BILL—Question, Mr. J. Redmond; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

THE MARKING OF FOREIGN MEAT—Question, Mr. Jeffreys; Answer, The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. H. Gardner).

MISSING VESSELS—Question, Mr. Heneage; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 860

MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN INDIA—Question, Sir D. Macfarlane; Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler).

FREED SLAVES—Question, Sir R. Temple; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) 861

THE CAVAN LAND COMMISSION—Questions, Mr. Knox; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

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MOTIONS.

Parochial Electors (Registration Acceleration) Bill—

Motion for Leave 864

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to Accelerate the Registration of Parochial Electors in England and Wales in the present year,"—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill ordered (*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Sir J. T. Hibbert:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 175] 865

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill—

Motion for Leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to facilitate and make provision for the restoration of Evicted Tenants to their Holdings in Ireland,"—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

After Debate, Motion *agreed to* 941

Bill ordered (*Mr. J. Morley, The Solicitor General:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 176.]

Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill (No. 125)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Conciliation (*Trade Disputes*) *Bill*—continued

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Mundella*).

After short Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow, at Two of the clock 947

EDUCATION CODE, 1894—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold Her assent to the words in page 17, Article 90, of the Education Code of 1894—namely, 'any outlay on the premises beyond the cost of ordinary repairs or,' and to all the words of the 17th April 1894 from 'in order that,' to the end,"—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

After short Debate, Question put:—The House divided:—Ayes 26; Noes 122.—(Division List, No. 29) 954

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (No. 122)—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow 955

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill (No. 115)—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—That they have *agreed to*—Army (Annual) Bill, without Amendment.

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill (No. 131)—As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

Wild Birds' Protection Act (1880) Amendment Bill (No. 134)—Considered in Committee.

Clause 1. Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

Solicitors' Examination Bill (No. 112)—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

East London Water Bill—*Ordered*, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee on the East London Water Bill, in Session 1886, and the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, in Session 1891, be referred to the Committee on the East London Water Bill,—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

Dogs Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Herbert Gardner*, *Mr. Secretary Asquith*, *The Solicitor General*, *The Lord Advocate*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 177.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 20.

Pistols Bill (No. 11)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read 957

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next 962

Colonial Officers (Leave of Absence) Bill (No. 25)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next 963

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 29) 964

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 20.

MORNING SITTING.

QUESTIONS.

THE SMALL ISLES—Questions, Dr. Macgregor; Answers, The Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan).

DUBLIN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 965

SECOND-CLASS TELEGRAPHISTS IN DUBLIN—Questions, Mr. Field; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 966

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE—Questions, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

CARBOLIC ACID—Question, Mr. Macdona; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 968

PERJURY IN EVICTION PROCEEDINGS—Question, Mr. Dane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

LEVEL CROSSINGS ON THE GREAT NORTHERN (IRELAND) RAILWAY—Question, Mr. Dane; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 968

ENNISKILLEN POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Dane; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley).

OFFICERS' PAY IN INDIA—Question, Mr. Naoroji; Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler) 970

CARSWELL POINT FOGHORN—Question, Mr. Young; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).

LADY VISITORS TO IRISH PRISONS—Question, Mr. Webb; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

THE "COSTA RICA PACKET"—Question, Mr. Hogan; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) 971

BOLTS AND NUTS FOR THE ADMIRALTY—Question, Mr. Wilson Lloyd; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth).

CHEADLE NATIONAL SCHOOLS—Question, Mr. C. M'Laren; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 972

THE ARRAN EVICTIONS—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

PARAFFIN AND DISASTROUS FIRES—Questions, Mr. Paul; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith).

NEW LUNATIC ASYLUM AT PORTRANE—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 973

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS, DUBLIN POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 974

GERMAN PRISON-MADE GOODS—Questions, Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Darling, Mr. J. Lowther; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella), The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).

BOARD OF TRADE PUBLICATIONS—Questions, Colonel Howard Vincent, Mr. Gibson Bowles, Mr. Bartley; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert), The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) 976

SUPPLY—DUKE OF EDINBURGH (ANNUITY)—*continued*

After Debate, Question put :—The House divided :—Ayes 298 ; Noes 67. —(Division List, No. 33) 1065

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SUPPLY—Committee upon Monday next.

Indian Railway Companies Bill—

Motion for Leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to enable Indian Railway Companies to pay interest out of Capital," —(*Mr. H. H. Fowler*) 1066

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to.*

Bill ordered (*Mr. H. H. Fowler, Sir J. T. Hibbert :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 184.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS ACCOMMODATION — MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed 'to consider whether any, and what, arrangements can be made to improve the Accommodation provided for the Members and Officials of this House, and for the representatives of the Press :

That Mr. Buchanan, Lord Burghley, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Freeman-Mitford, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Sir James Joicey, Major Jones, Mr. Alpheus Morton, Mr. M'Donnell, Mr. David Plunket, Lord Stanley, Colonel Howard Vincent, and Sir Julian Goldsmid be Members of the Committee :

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records :

That Five be the quorum,'"—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

After short Debate, objection taken, Motion postponed 1067

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (No. 122)—Read the third time, and passed.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (No. 115)—Read the third time, and passed.

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) Repeal Bill (No. 8)—Considered in Committee.

Clause 1, Committee report Progress ; to sit again upon Monday next.

MOTIONS.

—o—

Canal Tolls and Charges Provisional Order (No. 1) (Canals of Great Northern and other Railway Companies) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 178.]

Leaseholders (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Kearley, Mr. Frye, Mr. Brunner, Mr. Field :*) — Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 179.] 1068

Religious Opinions Prosecutions Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Storey, Mr. Maden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lloyd-George :*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 180.]

Small Tenants (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Crombie, Captain Sinclair, Mr. Wason*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 181.]

Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Herbert Maxwell, Lord Elcho, Mr. Shaw Stewart*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 182.]

Locomotive Threshing Engines Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir John Kennaway, Sir William Walrond, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Wingfield-Digby, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Round*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 183.]

PATENT AGENTS BILL—

The Select Committee on Patent Agents Bill nominated of,—Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Broad, Mr. Alban Gibbs, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, Sir John Leng, Mr. Edward M'Hugh, Mr. Mather, Mr. Nussey, Mr. W. F. D. Smith, and Mr. Warmington.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,"—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 23.

COMMISSION—The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—1. Behring Sea Award.—2. Army (Annual) 1069

NEW PEERS—Stuart Rendel, Esquire, having been created Baron Rendel, of Hatchlands, in the County of Surrey—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.—Sir Reginald Earle Welby, G.C.B., having been created Baron Welby of Allington, in the County of Lincoln—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

Trustee Act, 1893, Amendment Bill (No. 20)—Committee; House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 27)—

Second Reading:—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Balfour*) ... 1070

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

MURDER OF A CARETAKER IN COUNTY CORK—Question and Observations, The Marquess of Londonderry; Answer, The Earl of Cork.

MARKING OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE—The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be printed for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order. (No. 30) ... 1071

STANDING COMMITTEE—Report from the Committee of Chairmen of the Standing Committee, That they have appointed the Viscount Cross Chairman of the Standing Committee read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1072

North Berwick Provisional Order Bill (No. 18)—Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills—

Moved, "That the Lord Monkswell be added to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to; and a message ordered to be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to add one of their Members to the said Joint Committee for the consideration of the said Bill.

Town Improvements (Betterment)—Lords named of the Select Committee:—The Committee to appoint their own Chairman.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill—Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 31.)

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill—Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 32.)

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 23.

Royal Assent—Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—The House went; and being returned 1073

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to:—1. Behring Sea Award Act, 1894.—2. Army (Annual) Act, 1894.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

Emigration Statistics—Question, Colonel Howard Vincent; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).

"Industrial Accidents"—Question, Mr. Jacks; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1074

The Case of Saxon, the Sailor—Questions, Mr. Darling; Answers, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. E. Robertson).

County Down Sea Fisheries—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) 1075

Assault on a County Court Bailiff at Pembryn—Question, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith) 1076

Strokestown and Elphin Postal Arrangements — Questions, Mr. Bodkin; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) ... 1077

The Zanzibar Protectorate—Question, Sir R. Temple; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).

German Prison-Made Goods—Question, Mr. J. Chamberlain; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1079

The British East Africa Company—Question, Sir G. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).

Runaway Slave Settlement on the Juba River—Question, Mr. Alban Gibbs; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).

Shipwreck on Filey Brigg—Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1080

Free School Books in Scottish Schools—Questions, Mr. D. Crawford, Sir C. Cameron, Dr. Farquharson; Answers, The Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) 1081

Indian Cantonment Regulations—Questions, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir R. Temple; Answers, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler) 1082

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Uganda—Question, Mr. Lawrence; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) 1091
Stamp Deeds—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert).
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THE REVISED EDUCATION CODE—Questions, Sir F. S. Powell; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland).

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THE GLENLARA MURDER, CO. CORK—Questions, Mr. Darling, Mr. Flynn, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Jackson, Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. Carson; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) ... 1006

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS—Considered in Committee 1107

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Estate Duty.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty, in the case of every person dying on or after the first day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, upon the principal value of the property, real or personal, settled or not settled, which passes, or is to be deemed to pass, on or with reference to his death, a Duty at the graduated rates following (that is to say) :—

Where the principal value—				At the rate for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100, of—
Exceeds	£100	and does not exceed	£500	One pound.
"	£500	" "	£1,000	Two pounds.
"	£1,000	" "	£10,000	Three pounds.
"	£10,000	" "	£25,000	Four pounds.
"	£25,000	" "	£50,000	Four pounds and ten shillings.
"	£50,000	" "	£75,000	Five pounds.
"	£75,000	" "	£100,000	Five pounds and ten shillings.
"	£100,000	" "	£150,000	Six pounds.
"	£150,000	" "	£250,000	Six pounds and ten shillings.
"	£250,000	" "	£500,000	Seven pounds.
"	£500,000	" "	£1,000,000	Seven pounds and ten shillings.
"	£1,000,000			Eight pounds.

And, where property subject to Duty at the graduated rates to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution is settled, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty upon the principal value thereof a further Duty of one pound for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100.

WAYS AND MEANS—*continued.*

In respect of property chargeable with Duty to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution there shall not be levied the Duties following (that is to say) :—

1. The Stamp Duties imposed by 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' on the affidavit to be required and received from the person applying for Probate or Letters of Administration in England or Ireland, or on the inventory to be exhibited and recorded in Scotland.
2. The Stamp Duties imposed by section 38 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' as amended and extended by section 11 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889,' on the value of personal or moveable property to be included in accounts thereby directed to be delivered.
3. The additional Succession Duties imposed by section 21 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888.'
4. The Temporary Estate Duties imposed by sections 5 and 6 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889.'
5. The duty at the rate of one pound per centum which would, by virtue of the Acts in force relating to Legacy Duty or Succession Duty, have been payable under the will or intestacy of the deceased, or on or by reference to his death, under his disposition or any devolution from him,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After short Debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn 1122

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Income Tax.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the 'Income Tax Act, 1853,' the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say) :—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value on amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence ;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Four Pence ;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After long Debate, Amendment proposed, in lines 13 and 14, to leave out the words "the Duty of Four Pence ; In,"—(*Sir J. Lubbock*) ... 1178

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question" 1181

After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn 1188

Main Question again proposed.

After short Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* 1192

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Suez Canal Shares.

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of all dividends or other money received by the Treasury after the 1st day of July, 1894, in respect of Suez Canal Shares,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to* 1193

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Imperial and Naval Defence Acts.

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of any sum by which the aggregate payments made to the Naval Defence Account, under section 2 of 'The Naval Defence Act, 1889,' may exceed the actual expenditure on contract ships authorised by that Act ; and to provide that the further instalments payable to the said Account under the said section shall cease,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

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WAYS AND MEANS—*continued.*

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "expedient," in line 1, to the word "and," in line 4, in order to insert the words

"To close on the 31st of March, 1894, the Naval Defence Account as established by section 2 of 'The Naval Defence Act, 1889,'"—(*Lord G. Hamilton*) 1194

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question" 1196

After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn 1200

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of any sum by which the aggregate payments made to the Naval Defence Account, under section 2 of "The Naval Defence Act, 1889," may exceed the actual expenditure on contract ships authorised by that Act; and to provide that the further instalments payable to the said Account under the said section shall cease.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the application of the old Sinking Fund and the new Sinking Fund in paying off the loans borrowed under Part II. of "The Imperial Defence Act of 1888," and under "The Naval Defence Act, 1889."

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the permanent annual charge for the National Debt, of the interest of the said loans,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill (No. 125)—

Second Reading. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [19th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time" 1201

Question again proposed:—Debate resumed.

Observations, Mr. Pierpoint.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned:—Debate to be resumed To-morrow... 1202

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill (No. 176)—Second Reading.
Observations. Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill (No. 156)—Second Reading.
Observations. Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

Wild Birds Protection Act (1880) Amendment Bill (No. 134)—

[*Progress, 19th April.*] Bill considered in Committee 1203

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. P. M'Hugh.*)

Observations.

Motion *agreed to*:—Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

Religious Tests (Ireland) Bill (No. 48)—Order for Second Reading read.
Observations. Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

Solicitors' Examination Bill (No. 112)—Read the third time, and passed.

MOTIONS.

LONDON STREETS AND BUILDINGS BILL—

Ordered, That Mr. Kimber be discharged and Mr. P. M. Thornton be added to the Committee on London Streets and Buildings Bill,—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

VOLUNTEER ACTS—

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the working of the Volunteer Acts, and the legal status and obligations of Volunteers serving under them. —(*Mr. Secretary Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Railway Commission Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Albert Rollit, Dr. Hunter, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Channing, Sir Alfred Hickman, Mr. Burnie, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Field, Mr. Jacks, Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 185] 1204

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Limitation of Actions Bill (No. 13)—

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Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill,"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to.*

Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee 1207

Land Transfer Bill (No. 19)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

After Observations, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next ... 1210

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill (No. 29)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Monkswell*) ... 1211

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

SANITARY CONDITION OF HOWTH AND CLONTARF — Observations, Lord Howth, Lord Monkswell.

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Colonial Officers (Leave of Absence) Bill (No. 25)—House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS (BETTERMENT)—The Lord Thring added to the Select Committee.

Solicitors Examination Bill—Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 33.)

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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WAYS AND MEANS—considered in Committee... 1229

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Estate Duty.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty, in the case of every person dying on or after the first day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, upon the principal value of all property, real or personal, settled or not settled, which passes, or is to be deemed to pass on or with reference to his death, a Duty at the graduated rates following (that is to say) :—

Where the principal value—				At the rate for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100, of—
Exceeds	£100	and does not exceed	£500	One pound.
„	£500	„ „	£1,000	Two pounds.
„	£1,000	„ „	£10,000	Three pounds.
„	£10,000	„ „	£25,000	Four pounds.
„	£25,000	„ „	£50,000	Four pounds and ten shillings.
„	£50,000	„ „	£75,000	Five pounds.
„	£75,000	„ „	£100,000	Five pounds and ten shillings.
„	£100,000	„ „	£150,000	Six pounds.
„	£150,000	„ „	£250,000	Six pounds and ten shillings.
„	£250,000	„ „	£500,000	Seven pounds.
„	£500,000	„ „	£1,000,000	Seven pounds and ten shillings.
„	£1,000,000			Eight pounds.

And, where property subject to Duty at the graduated rates to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution is settled, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty upon the principal value thereof a further Duty of £1 for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100.

In respect of property chargeable with Duty to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution there shall not be levied the Duties following (that is to say) :—

1. The Stamp Duties imposed by 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' on the affidavit to be required and received from the person applying for Probate or Letters of Administration in England or Ireland, or on the inventory to be exhibited and recorded in Scotland.
2. The Stamp Duties imposed by section 38 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' as amended and extended by section 11 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889,' on the value of personal or moveable property to be included in accounts thereby directed to be delivered.
3. The additional Succession Duties imposed by section 21 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888.'
4. The temporary Estate Duties imposed by sections 5 and 6 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889.'
5. The Duty at the rate of one pound per centum which would, by virtue of the Acts in force relating to Legacy Duty or Succession Duty, have been payable under the will or intestacy of the deceased, or on or by reference to his death, under his disposition or any devolution from him,"—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After long Debate, Resolution *agreed to* 1323

Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 17th instant, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions,—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

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[*April* 24.]

Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Bill (No. 125)—

Second Reading. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [23rd April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed:—Debate resumed.

After short Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Thursday 1324

Quarter Sessions Bill [*Lords*] (No. 162)—

Order for Second Reading read 1325

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

Building Societies (No. 2) Bill (No. 157)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. H. Gladstone.*)

After short Debate, Motion agreed to. Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure 1326

Religious Tests (Ireland) Bill (No. 48)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh.*)

After short Debate, Second Reading deferred till To-morrow 1327

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 5) Bill (No. 165)—Read a second time, and committed.

Wemyss, &c., Water Provisional Order Bill (No. 158)—Read a second time, and committed.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill (No. 147)—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &C.—That they have added a Lord to the Joint Committee appointed by both Houses on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill; and request this House to add one of its Members to the said Joint Committee for the consideration of the said Bill.

MOTIONS.

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. James Stevenson, Mr. Perks, Mr. Charles Wilson, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. John Wilson* (Durham), *Mr. Snape, Mr. Woods*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 186.]

Procedure of Parliament Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Labouchere, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. William Allen*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 187.]

Church of Scotland Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Beith, Mr. Stephen Williamson, Mr. Dunn:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 188.]

Shop Hours Act (1892) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Provand, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Samuel Smith, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Channing, Mr. Rankin:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 189.] 1328

LAND ACTS (IRELAND)—

Ordered, That the Committee on Land Acts (Ireland) do consist of Seventeen Members.

Ordered, That Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Carson, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Hayes Fisher, Mr. Fuller, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. W. Kenny, Mr. Leese, Mr. Macartney, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Sexton, Colonel Waring, and Mr. Wharton be Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum,—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill (No. 10)—

Order for Second Reading read 1329

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Roby.*)

After short Debate, Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Sir A. Hickman*) 1338

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question" ... 1348

After Debate, Mr. Roby rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put" 1383

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and *agreed to.*

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question":—The House divided:—Ayes 281; Noes 194.—(Division List, No. 34.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

Public Libraries (Scotland) Bill (No. 171)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Dalziel.*)

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill (No. 147)—Read the third time, and passed.

Commons Bill (No. 39)—Order for Committee read, and discharged:—Bill withdrawn.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE—Third Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Ways and Means—Finance Bill—Resolution [24th April] reported, and *agreed to.*—[See page 1229.]

Ordered, That it be a further Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 17th instant, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 190.]

Statute Law Revision Bills, &c. (Joint Committee)—

Lords Message [24th April] requesting this House to nominate an additional Member to the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills, for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill, considered.

Ordered, That the Select Committee [appointed by this House to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills] do consist of Seven Members.

Ordered, That Sir Edward Hill be added to the Committee for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them that this House has nominated an additional Member to the Committee, as requested by the Lords,—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 26.

Indian Legislative Councils—Address for a Return—

Address for—

"Return, showing the composition of the several Legislative Councils in India, and extracts or copies of papers showing the Regulations made under Section 1, Sub-section (4), of 'The Indian Councils Act, 1892,' and the methods by which these Regulations have been carried into effect in the several Provinces having Legislative Councils,"—(*The Viscount Cross*) 1385

Observations:—Address *agreed to.*

Law of Inheritance Amendment Bill (No. 14)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Duke of Norfolk*) 1391

After Debate, on Question, whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion?—their Lordships divided:—Contents 52; Not-Contents 63 ... 1403

Resolved in the negative; and Bill to be read 2ª this day six months.

Charitable Trusts Acts Amendment Bill (No. 12)—

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Halsbury.*)

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next 1404

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill (No. 29)—House in Committee (according to Order.)

Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

Von Krause's Petition—Petition from Friedrich Wilhelm von Krause, of the City of Berlin, Banker, for leave to bring in a Bill to declare the marriage of Gustav Adolph Christian Egmont Von Krause with Marie Heinricksdorff null and void,—(*The Earl of Lauderdale.*)

VON KRAUSE'S PETITION—*continued.*

Moved, "That the said Petition be rejected,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) ... 1405

After Observations, Motion *agreed to* :—Petition rejected accordingly.

SANITARY CONDITION OF HOWTH AND CLONTARF—MOTION FOR PAPERS—

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Reports of Dr. Stafford, Medical Sanitary Officer to the Local Government Board of Ireland, on the sanitary condition of the towns of Howth and Clontarf,"—(The Lord Howth, *E. Howth.*)

After short Debate, Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn ... 1406

North Berwick Provisional Order Bill (No. 18)—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS—

Message from the Commons that they have added a Member to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills, to consider the Merchant Shipping Bill, as requested by their Lordships.

A Message ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 34.)

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 26.

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—o—

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BOYCOTTINGS IN KELLS—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

THE CORK MURDER—Questions, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Dane; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

SUPERANNUATION OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS—Question, Sir R. Temple; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 1447

NAVAL COURTS MARTIAL—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman).

EXPENDITURE ON BARRACKS—Question, Mr. Brodrick; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1448

THE LADIES' GALLERY—Questions, Mr. W. M'Laren, Lord R. Churchill, Sir D. Macfarlane, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. Bartley; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. H. Gladstone).

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THE BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL—Questions, Sir G. Baden-Powell, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) 1449

THE PROPERTY TAX—Question, Colonel Howard Vincent; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) 1450

VISITS OF FOREIGN OFFICERS TO ENGLISH DOCKYARDS—Question, Mr. Boulnois; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth).

THE BUDGET PROPOSALS—Questions, Mr. Colston, Mr. Brodrick; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) 1451

PRISON OFFICERS' PENSIONS—Question, Mr. Mildmay; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. George Russell) ... 1453

THE REGISTRATION BILL—Question, Sir H. James; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS—Questions, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt)... 1454

MOTION.

——o——

Established Church (Wales) Bill—

Motion for Leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the temporalities thereof,"—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith*) 1455

After Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*) 1546

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate adjourned till Monday next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

Wild Birds Protection Act (1880) Amendment Bill (No. 134)—

[*Progress 23rd April.*]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 *agreed to.*

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 14, to leave out Sub-section (1),—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (1) stand part of the Clause" ... 1547

After short Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Sexton*) 1548

After short Debate, Motion *agreed to*... 1549

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday 30th May.

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Building Societies Bill (No 27)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Banbury.*)

After short Debate, Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged, and the Bill withdrawn,"—(*Mr. Banbury.*)

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill (No. 150)—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill (No. 140)—Reported, without amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Quarter Sessions Bill [*Lords*] **(No. 162)**—Considered in Committee ... 1550
Clause 1. Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Public Libraries (Scotland) Bill (No. 171)—Considered in Committee.
Clause 1. Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &C.—

That they do propose that the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet in Committee Room B, on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock.

MOTIONS.

——o——

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 6) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. J. Morley, Sir J. T. Hibbert*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 191.]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 7) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. J. Morley, Sir J. T. Hibbert*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 192.]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. J. Morley, Sir J. T. Hibbert*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 193.]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir W. Foster, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 194] 1551

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir W. Foster, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 195.]

Commissioners of Works Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. H. Gladstone, Sir J. T. Hibbert*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 196.]

Local Courts of Bankruptcy (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Wolff, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Young, Mr. Knox, Mr. Flynn*:)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 197.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 27.

AGRARIAN CRIME IN IRELAND—

Question and Observations, The Marquess of Londonderry 1553

After Debate, the subject dropped.

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Antique Casts at South Kensington—
Questions and Observations, Earl Cowper 1569
After Debate, the subject dropped.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill—Read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next ... 1574

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 27) — House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

Business of the House—*Ordered*, That the Evening Sitting of the House on Tuesday next, and on all subsequent Tuesdays during the present Session, do commence at half-past Five of the clock, unless the House shall otherwise order.

Law Library, Four Courts (Ireland) Bill (No. 29)—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

Marking of Foreign and Colonial Produce — The Lord Vernon exempted from attendance on the Select Committee, and The Lord De L'Isle and Dudley added to the Select Committee.

Town Improvements (Betterment) — The Earl Cowper and The Lord Egerton added to the Select Committee 1575

Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills—Message from the Commons, That they have ordered that the Select Committee appointed by them to join with a Committee of their Lordships on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet the Committee appointed by their Lordships in Committee Room B on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock, as desired by their Lordships.

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 27.

Morning Sitting.

New Writ Issued—For the Borough of Hackney (Southern Division), *v.* Sir Charles Russell, G.C.M.G., Manor of Northstead,—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

QUESTIONS.

—o—

Gresham University Commission—Question, Mr. Benn; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert).
Cost of the Royal Commission on Labour—Question, Mr. Benn; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) ... 1576
Dog-Muzzling Regulations at Kanturk—Questions, Mr. Flynn; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).
Board of Works Loans in Ireland—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) 1577
Labourers' Cottages in the Roscrea Union—Question, Mr. Crean; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1578
The Lewis Estates, Galway—Questions, Mr. Roche, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Bodkin, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

ST. SILAS SCHOOLS, HUNSLET—Questions, Mr. Jackson; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 1579

MADDEN ESTATE, COUNTY FERMANAGH—Question, Mr. Dane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1580

INCITEMENT TO BOYCOTTING AT PEAKE, COUNTY CORK—Questions, Mr. Dane, Mr. Macartney; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1581

LORD ANNALY'S ESTATE IN COUNTY LONGFORD—Questions, Mr. Dane, Mr. Hayden; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) ... 1582

TRAINING COLLEGES—Question, Mr. T. Bayley; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 1583

WRITS OF SUMMONSES—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1584

IRISH CHURCH TEMPORALITIES COMMISSION—Question, Mr. Flynn; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

PIERS IN IRELAND—Question, Sir T. Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) 1585

KILLAVULLEN NATIONAL SCHOOL—Question, Mr. W. Abraham; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

PRISON-MADE GOODS FOR THE POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Matthews; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 1586

GERMAN-MADE BRUSHES—Question, Mr. Holland; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).

LOSS OF LIFE IN RECENT GALES—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1587

2ND BATTALION DORSET REGIMENT—Question, Mr. Wingfield-Digby; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman).

VOLUNTEERS AND GUN LICENCES—Question, Mr. Wingfield-Digby; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert).

EVICTIONS IN SOUTH LEITRIM—Question, Mr. Tully; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1588

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)—RESOLUTION. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, as amended [20th April],

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills, introduced by a Minister of the Crown, relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee:

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with Fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged:

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee,"—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

Question again proposed:—Debate resumed.

Amendment proposed, in line 9, after the words "Committee of Selection," to insert the words—

"who shall have regard in such appointment to the desirability of approximating the balance of Parties in the Committee to that of the Whole House, and,"—(*Mr. Renshaw*) 1589

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)—*continued.*

After Debate, Amendment amended, by leaving out the words "desirability of approximating," and inserting the words "approximation of,"—(*Mr. Wodehouse.*)

Words, as amended, inserted 1599

Amendment proposed, in line 11, after the word "discharged," to insert the words—

"Provided that no Bill may be committed to the said Committee respecting the establishment or endowment or the disestablishment or disendowment of religion."—(*Mr. J. A. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted" 1600

After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn 1601

Amendment proposed, in line 11, after the word "discharged," to insert the words—

"Provided that no Bill be committed to the said Committee which does not refer to the whole of Scotland,"—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted" 1602

After short Debate, Question put:—The House divided:—Ayes 177; Noes 212.—(Division List, No. 35) 1606

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

"Provided always, that all the Members representing Scottish constituencies shall be excused from serving on Private Bill Committees,"—(*Mr. Hozier.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added" 1607

After short Debate, Amendment, by leave, withdrawn 1608

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

After further Debate, Main Question, as amended, put:—The House divided:—Ayes 232; Noes 207.—(Division List, No. 36) 1613

Ordered, That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills introduced by a Minister of the Crown relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee:

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with Fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have regard in such appointment to the approximation of the balance of Parties in the Committee to that of the whole House, and who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged:

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee,—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

MOTION.

Local Government (Scotland) Bill—

Motion for Leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish a Local Government Board for Scotland, and make further provision for Local Government in Scotland,"—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

After Debate, Motion *agreed to* 1636

Bill ordered (*Sir G. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, The Solicitor General for Scotland:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 202.]

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Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Acts Amendment (County of Bute) Bill (No. 142)—

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir C. Cameron.*)

After observations, it being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill (No. 140)—Bill read the third time, and passed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 1) Bill (No. 150) — As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next 1637

Public Buildings (London) Bill—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 4 :—Amendments made.

Another Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 30, after the word "served," to insert the words "The Order shall not require to be confirmed by Act of Parliament,"—(*Mr. A. C. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

It being after ten minutes to Seven of the clock, and objection being taken to Further Proceedings, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

Selection (Standing Committees)—Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added the following Fifteen Members to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, in respect of the Building Societies (No. 2) Bill: Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Banbury, Mr. Benn, Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Bucknill, Dr. Clark, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Thomas Healy, Mr. Lees Knowles, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Pickersgill, and Mr. George Russell.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Canal Rates, Tolls, and Charges Provisional Order (No. 2) (Bridgwater, &c. Canals) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 198.]

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Rees Davies, Mr. Albert Bright, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Arch, Mr. Husband, Mr. Joseph Pease* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 199.]

Steam Trawlers (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Crombie, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Renshaw, Sir William Wedderburn* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 200.] 1638

Mines Royalties and Easements Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Sir James Joicey, Mr. John Wilson* (Durham), *Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Joseph Pease, Mr. Pickard* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 201.]

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &c.—Lords Message [26th April] relating to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, &c., considered.

Ordered, That the Committee appointed by this House to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room B, upon Monday next, at Twelve of the clock, as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith,—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

EVENING SITTING.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Committee.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1886—RESOLUTION—

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"In the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Crofters (Scotland) Act of 1886 be amended so as to increase and make effective the power to enlarge existing holdings, and to provide that a person who, in the opinion of the Commissioners, is substantially a crofter, and who is resident in the crofting parish in which his holding is situated, shall not necessarily be excluded from the benefits of the Act because he does not reside on his holding,"—(*Sir D. Macfarlane,*)—instead thereof 1644

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

After Debate, Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present:—House adjourned ... 1652

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 30.

The Earl of Selborne—Sat Speaker.

House adjourned during pleasure; and resumed by the Lord Chancellor.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION—MOTION FOR A RETURN 1653

After short observations, Lord Norton, Lord Monkswell,

Return showing, as regards the moneys received by the council of each county and county borough in England and Wales out of the residue of the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Duties in respect of the four years ended the 31st of March, 1894, the aggregate amount expended by each council on purposes other than educational; and what has been allowed to accumulate without appropriation: Ordered to be laid before the House,—(*The Lord Norton*) 1658

Charitable Trusts Acts Amendment Bill (No. 12)—

Committee.

House in Committee (according to Order).

After Observations, Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill — House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

County Councils Association (Scotland) Expenses Bill (No. 27) — Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented (The Lord Playfair);* read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 35.)

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 36.)

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 30.

QUESTIONS.

THE CASTLEBLAYNEY MILK CONTRACT—Questions, Mr. W. Johnston; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley)... ... 1659

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND—Questions, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Provand; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

THE POST OFFICE AND THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES—Questions, Sir J. Fergusson, Mr. Labouchere, Sir J. Whitehead; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 1660

SAMOA—Questions, Sir T. Esmonde, Mr. Hogan; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey) 1661

EXPENSES UNDER THE LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACT—Question, Mr. E. Barry; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1662

MAROTSILAND—Question, Mr. Crosfield; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir E. Grey).

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE STRANORLAR UNION—Questions, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. Macartney; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1663

CASUALTIES TO VESSELS AT HOYLAKE—Questions, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) ... 1664

THE APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES—Questions, Mr. Dodd; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith) ... 1665

"TORISH *v.* ORR"—Question, Mr. Dane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1666

MR. JAMES GRANT, J.P.—Question, Mr. W. Johnston; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) ... 1667

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ISLAND OF CUMBRAE—Question, Mr. Graham Murray; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) ... 1668

WELSH CATHEDRAL CHURCHES—Question, Mr. Jasper More; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith).

THE "ESCAPED NUN" IN GLASGOW—Question, Mr. Diamond; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1669

KILPEDDER PETTY SESSIONS—Questions, Mr. Kilbride; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1670

IRISH LABOURERS' TITHE RENT-CHARGE ARREARS—Questions, Mr. Gibney, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).

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THE LEWIS ESTATES IN COUNTY GALWAY—Question, Mr. Roche; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1671
DEFALCATIONS OF BARONY CONSTABLES IN MONAGHAN COURTS—Question, Mr. Diamond; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley) 1672
THE VOLUNTEER DECORATION—Question, Mr. Paul; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman).
LONDON DISTRICT SURVEYORS—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith) 1673
SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN, J.P.—Question, Mr. A. C. Morton; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith).
LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES OFF SHERKIN ISLAND AND LOSS OF NETS AND GEAR BY FISHERMEN—Questions, Mr. Gilhooly, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).
SEAMEN AND STOKERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) ... 1674
THE INDIAN MINTS—Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answers, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler) ... 1675
HERRING FISHING ON THE SCOTTISH COASTS—Question, Sir W. Wedderburn; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) 1676
SCHOOL FEES AT MATLOCK—Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland).
THE OAKINGTON (CAMBRIDGE) OVERSEERS—Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) 1677
NENAGH WATERWORKS LOAN—Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) 1678
LIVERPOOL TELEGRAPH OFFICE—Question, Mr. Saunders; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley) 1679
NEWSPAPER POSTAGE—Question, Mr. Saunders; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. A. Morley).
WRITERS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON—Question, Mr. Saunders; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Mr. Acland) 1680
THE ESTATE DUTY—Questions, Mr. Carson, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Knox, Mr. Bartley; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt).
THE FEES TO THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN—Questions, Mr. Powell Williams, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Graham Murray; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt), The Secretary to the Treasury (Sir J. T. Hibbert) 1682
THE FINANCE BILL—Questions, Mr. Bartley; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt).
SCOTTISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPERIAL REVENUE—Questions, Mr. Cochrane, Dr. Macgregor; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) 1683
1ST CAITHNESS VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY CORPS—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) ... 1684
MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL—Question, Mr. Roby; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) 1685
EVICTIONS IN SOUTH LEITRIM—Question, Mr. Tully; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Morley).
HOURS OF LABOUR ON SCOTCH RAILWAYS—Questions, Mr. W. Whitelaw; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella).
ARMY EXAMINATIONS—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1686
FOREIGN DEATH DUTIES—Questions, Mr. Goschen, Sir G. Baden-Powell; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) ... 1687
TITHE RENT-CHARGE—Question, Mr. A. J. Balfour; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Asquith).

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND—Questions, Mr. Mowbray, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. George Russell) 1688

MOTION.

—o—

Factories and Workshops Bill—

Motion for Leave.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend and extend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops,"—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill ordered (*Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. George Russell:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 204] ... 1690

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Established Church (Wales) Bill—

Motion for Leave. [Adjourned Debate.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [26th April],

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the temporalities thereof,"—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

Question again proposed:—Debate resumed.

After long Debate, Question put, and *agreed to* 1778

Bill ordered (*Mr. Secretary Asquith, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bryce, The Solicitor General:*)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 205.]

Parochial Electors (Registration Acceleration) Bill (No. 175)—

Order for Second Reading read 1779

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)

After short Debate, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned:—Debate to be resumed To-morrow 1780

Dogs Bill (No. 177)—

Order for Second Reading read.

After short Debate, Second Reading deferred till To-morrow 1781

Quarter Sessions Bill [*Lords*] (No. 162)—

Considered in Committee—[*Progress, 26th April*].

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, to leave out line 5,—(*Sir J. Rigby.*)

Question proposed, "That line 5 stand part of the Clause."

Quarter Sessions Bill—continued

After Observations, Question put, and negatived 1782

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. A. C. Morton.*)

Question put, and negatived.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 15, to leave out all the words after the word "is" to the word "this," in line 18, and insert the words "hereby repealed,"—(*Sir J. Rigby.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and negatived.

Question proposed, "That the words 'hereby repealed' be there inserted."

After short Debate, Objection being taken to Further Proceedings, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House :—Committee report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow 1783

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill (No. 148)—Read the third time, and passed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill (No. 150)—Read the third time, and passed.

Shop Hours Act (1892) Amendment Bill (No. 189) — Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill (No. 10)—Considered in Committee.
Clause 1. Committee report Progress ; to sit again upon Monday next.

Derelict Vessels (Reports) Bill (No. 87)—Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Mundella* :)—Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 203.]

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*Authorised Edition*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT* OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 12 MARCH 1894, IN THE FIFTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1894.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 10th April 1894.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Viscount Charlemont—Report made from the Lord Chancellor, that the right of James Alfred Caulfeild Viscount Charlemont to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Lord Clonbrock—Report made from the Lord Chancellor, that the right of Luke Gerald Dillon Baron Clonbrock to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Moved, "That a Committee of Six Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session (The Lord Chancellor); agreed to: The Lords following were named of the Committee:

L. Chancellor.
E. Morley.
E. Kimberley.
L. Watson.
L. Halsbury.
L. Thring.

Ordered, that the Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman;

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint Six Members of that House to join with the said Committee pursuant to the Resolution of this House of the 15th of March last and to the Message of the House of Commons of yesterday signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:

M. Lansdowne
M. Bath
E. Winchilsea and Nottingham
E. Chesterfield
E. Jersey
E. Lauderdale
E. Lindsay
E. Waldegrave
E. Cadogan
E. Belmore
E. Harrowby
E. Amherst
E. Camperdown
E. Wharncliffe
E. Lathom
E. de Montalt
V. Sidmouth
V. Hardinge
V. Oxenbridge
L. Carrington
(*L. Chamberlain*)
L. de Ros
L. Clinton
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Balfour of Burley
L. Boyle
(*E. Cork and Orrery*)
L. Foxford
(*E. Limerick*)
L. Colchester
L. Wigan
(*E. Crawford and Balcarres*)
L. Poltimore
L. Belper
L. Brougham and Vaux
L. Houghton
L. Hartismere
(*L. Henniker*)
L. Sandhurst
L. Fermanagh
(*E. Erne*)
L. Monk-Bretton
L. Sudley
(*E. Arran*)
L. Northington
(*L. Henley*)
L. Colville of Culross
L. Kensington

All Petitions relating to Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present Session referred to the Committee unless otherwise ordered.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION.

The Lords following, namely—

E. Lathom
V. Oxenbridge
L. Colville of Culross
L. Kensington

with the Chairman of Committees, were appointed a Committee to select and propose to the House the names of the Five Lords to form a Select Committee for the consideration of each opposed Private Bill.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Select Committee appointed: The Lords following, with the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, and the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:

D. Richmond
D. Saint Albans
D. Devonshire
M. Breadalbane
(*L. Steward*)
M. Salisbury
M. Bath
M. Ripon
E. Waldegrave
E. Mount Edgcumbe
E. Belmore
E. Harrowby
E. Bradford
E. Camperdown
E. Strafford
E. Kimberley
E. Lathom
E. de Montalt
E. Cranbrook
E. Ancaster
V. Oxenbridge
V. Cross
L. Boyle
(*E. Cork and Orrery*)
L. Foxford
(*E. Limerick*)
L. Colchester
L. Kerr
(*M. Lothian*)
L. Rowton
L. Colville of Culross
L. Kensington
L. Knutsford

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Thursday next; (The Earl of Kimberley).—(No. 15.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 16.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 17.)

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 18.)

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 10th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

DUNDALK GAOL.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has his attention been called to the directions given by the Prisons Board to the Governor of Dundalk Gaol not to admit the Sanitary Inspector of Nuisances (under the Public Health Act) within the gaol; have the local Magistrates fined the Governor in consequence; will the Prisons Board pay the fine; and what steps will be taken for the protection of public health where it is alleged to be imperilled by nuisance within gaol walls?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): My attention has been drawn to the case referred to, and to the fact that the Governor of the prison has been fined for refusing to obey an order of the Magistrates to admit the Sanitary Inspector to the prison premises for the purpose of inspecting an alleged nuisance. The Prisons Board will, I presume, under the circumstances, pay the fine. With regard to the last paragraph, the Board inform me that it is not possible that any dangerous nuisance could exist in a prison with the existing precautions taken, and having regard to the statutable duties required to be performed by the Medical Officer and the Governor.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will not some steps be taken to settle this matter, or are dangerous nuisances to be allowed still to exist?

MR. J. MORLEY: This nuisance is not of the class called dangerous. It is a question of burning material against the wall. The Law Officers are of opinion that the sanitary officers can claim no right of entry.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN DUNDALK UNION.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Local Government Board Inspector only recommended 11 labourers' cottages out of 21 recommended by Dundalk Union, and that great dissatisfaction exists amongst the labourers in consequence; and will it be necessary for the labourers to get fresh representations made before further accommodation for them is sanctioned?

MR. J. MORLEY: The schemes recently submitted by the Guardians of Dundalk Union proposed the erection of 26 cottages, but the Inspector of the Local Government Board, after considering the evidence given for and against the proposal at the local inquiry and inspecting the sites selected, felt himself unable to recommend sanction to the schemes for more than 11 houses as stated in the question. Of the 15 not recommended two were withdrawn by the Guardians at the inquiry; the sites for five others were not suitable; and the evidence given with respect to the remaining eight the Inspector did not consider warranted him in recommending them for approval. No objection to the Inspector's Report has been received from the Board of Guardians, and it is to be observed that 78 cottages have already been authorised for this Union. With regard to the last paragraph of the question, fresh representations would be necessary before a new scheme could be made by the Guardians.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN PHŒNIX PARK, DUBLIN.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether anything further has been done by the Board of Works to relax their proposed closing of the Phœnix Park roads to vehicular traffic; is it the fact that, while tradesmen's and gardeners' carts are excluded, permits are allowed to those of two of the local gentry; has the right to drive through Knockmaroon Gate existed during at least the present century; is he aware that the withdrawal of this right will lengthen the journey between the Strawberry Beds and Dublin by two miles, and compel the ascent and descent of the steep Knockmaroon Hill, which is 162 feet over sea level, and also that the market gardeners of the district feel acutely the closing of this gate; and what saving to the Treasury is estimated to result from the suspension of traffic through the park *viâ* Knockmaroon?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Board of Works are relaxing the Regulations with reference to the Knockmaroon Gate in favour of all previous passholders, and such relaxation will hold good until the next Summer Assizes, in order to give the Grand Jury the opportunity of making provision for putting the county roads in proper order for heavy traffic. No right to use the park road has ever been recognised, permits having invariably been required for all heavy traffic. I am informed that the closing of the Knockmaroon Gate lengthens the distance from that gate to Parkgate Street by about one furlong, and not two miles; and I should also point out that, as no doubt the market gardeners have to be in town before 6 a.m. and the gate is not opened till then, the actual inconvenience occasioned was presumably confined to the ascent of the hill on the home journey. The object of the step was not to save money but to prevent an abuse which directly militates against the use of the Park as a pleasure resort for all the citizens of Dublin.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain how it is that the privilege is granted to two certain gentlemen while ordinary common people are shut out?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I should explain that light traffic has never been in question, but only heavy traffic.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to give notice that on the Estimates I will call attention to the action of the Board of Works in Ireland, and their general conduct in connection with the Phœnix Park.

MANSLAUGHTER BY A BELFAST SHIP'S CARPENTER.

Mr. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that, on the 3rd of November, a Belfast ship's carpenter, named Aiken, entered the farm of a Catholic, named Mullen, at Garvagh, County Derry, and began to beat Mullen's son, who was working in the field, with a loaded stick, and that, on the boy resisting, Aiken drew a revolver and deliberately fired from less than a yard's distance, killing young Mullen on the spot, and that no provocation for the murder was given; whether he is aware that the entire jury were Protestants, that is to say, of the religious persuasion of the prisoner; and will any steps be taken to restrain the carrying of revolvers?

Mr. ROSS (Londonderry): Is it not a fact that the account given by the deceased man was proved by witnesses to be impossible; was not the prisoner himself proved to have been injured by the blow of a spade; and did not the jury find him guilty of manslaughter under provocation, and recommend him to mercy on account of the murderous assault committed on him before the pistol was used? Further, was not the learned Judge—Justice Andrews—entitled to give weight to the view of the jury?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot, of course, answer questions as to these details without notice. The facts appear to be correctly stated in the first and second paragraphs of the question. The jury found a verdict of manslaughter, with a recommendation to mercy, and the learned Judge who presided sentenced the prisoner to nine months' imprisonment. I presume the Judge, in passing so light a sentence, came to the conclusion on the facts of the case that grave provocation and violence preceded the use of the pistol. The police are of opinion that the crime was due to the effects of drink. With regard to the third paragraph, the County of Londonderry is not proclaimed against the carrying of revolvers.

Mr. SEXTON: Is it not the case that the murdered man was working in a field while the murderer was swaggering about all day with a revolver? Is it not a fact, too, that the sentence will only amount to about four months' imprisonment from the day of the conviction; and can the right hon. Gentleman explain how it happened that in the South of Ireland, when a Catholic is placed on his trial on a charge involving Party feeling, Catholics are kept out of the jury box and an entirely Protestant jury is sworn, while if a Protestant is being charged the whole jury is composed of Protestants?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am not aware that it is the case that, since I have been intimately concerned with Irish administration, Irish juries have been exclusively of one denomination. I think the contrary is the case. As to the other question of my hon. Friend, it is not for me to review the conduct of the Judge. I think my hon. Friend is in error in stating the length of the imprisonment; I think the sentence dates from the day of committal. The Judge is, I understand, a scrupulously fair-minded Judge in the administration of the Criminal Law, and he came to the conclusion he ought to act on the recommendation of the jury. I believe he does not consider it a light sentence under the circumstances, and if he thinks that adequate, it is not for me to revise it.

DRUNKEN PUBLICANS.

Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the report in the local newspapers of a case decided in the Wrexham Borough Police Court, on Monday, the 2nd of April, from which it appears that, on Monday, the 2nd instant, a licensee of a public-house was summoned for being found drunk on his licensed premises during opening hours; that the Magistrate's clerk said a publican could not be prosecuted on his own premises during opening hours, and based his advice to the Magistrate upon the case of "Warden *v* Tye"; and that the Bench then dismissed the summons on that point; whether this decision is correct in point of law; and whether any authority exists for the proposition that a publican is at liberty to get drunk, provided he does so on his own premises and during opening hours?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): I have referred to the case of "Warden *v.* Tye," and find that the decision was that a licensed person found drunk on his own premises could not be convicted under Section 13 of the Licensing Act, 1872, for permitting drunkenness on his premises. The case of "Warden *v.* Tye" was decided in 1877, and, so far as I know, has never been appealed. I conclude, therefore, that the law was correctly laid down in that case. It would appear, however, from the observations of the Judges that proceedings might be taken under Section 12, which imposes a penalty on any person found drunk on licensed premises.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS AND TRADES UNIONS.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Messrs. Berry and Sons, of Ashburton, who hold a contract from the War Office for the supply of serge, have dismissed a number of their workmen in consequence of their having joined a Trade Union; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made with regard to these allegations for the purpose of ascertaining the facts of the case?

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): No complaint or report has been received of the facts stated in my hon. Friend's question; if any complaint should come to hand, inquiry will be made into it.

Mr. FENWICK: Will the right hon. Gentleman of his own initiative make inquiries into this case, because I am assured men have been dismissed, and only recently a threat was made that others would be dismissed if they joined the Union?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We have no information; and I do not think it would do for me of my own accord to inquire into the matter without some information being sent me. The firm in question have a very small contract.

Mr. FENWICK: I will myself supply the right hon. Gentleman with information.

THE ARRAN FORESHORE.

Mr. BIRKMYRE (Ayr, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that Thomas Anderson, fisherman, Ayr, was interdicted by the Sheriff of Bute in the spring of last year from erecting a hut on the foreshore of Arran, on uncultivated ground; and whether the right to erect such a hut is in accordance with the Act, Geo. 2, c. 23, entitled "An Act for Encouraging the Fisheries in that part of Great Britain called Scotland"?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan, &c.): I regret that I have not seen a report of the case referred to in this question, but the Act of 29 Geo. 2, c. 23, which my hon. Friend cites, has, I think, been usually interpreted to give to fishermen the undisturbed use of any land adjoining the seashore, which may, from time to time, be uncultivated, for purposes incidental to the conduct of their fishing enterprise. I am not aware that it has ever been extended to include the right to erect a hut or other structure of a permanent character.

THE VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' DECORATION.

Mr. BIRKMYRE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the case that the decorations given to Volunteer officers of 20 years' standing are withheld from officers who have served part of that time in the ranks; and, if so, whether he proposes to adopt a plan by which the decoration will be conferred on all officers who have completed 20 years' service as Volunteers, altogether irrespective of the rank they have held during any part of their period of service?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is not quite as the hon. Member supposes. The Royal Warrant expressly allows half the time in the ranks to count as service towards the 20 years' service necessary to qualify for the Volunteer officers' decoration. I have already stated, in reply to the noble Lord the Member for Edinburgh, that officers of 20 years' service in all who may not be qualified for the officers' decoration will be eligible for the long service badge which is to be given to Volunteers of 20 years' service?

WEST CORK POSTAL SERVICE.

Mr. E. BARRY (Cork Co., S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to resolutions recently passed at all the Poor Law Boards and Town Councils of West Cork, and also by the Town Council of the City of Cork, protesting against the existing postal service in West Cork as being inadequate, and requesting that a mid-day train be despatched from Cork soon after the arrival of the Dublin train; and whether steps will be taken to so improve the postal arrangements as to secure that letters arriving from Dublin and England by the morning mail to Cork may be transmitted to the towns of West Cork instead of being retained as at present in Cork for three and a-half hours?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): My attention has been directed to this subject. The delay at Cork, mentioned in this question, is due to the fact that there are no trains from Cork to the West by which the mails are carried. The Company, who have been approached on the subject, are apparently of opinion that the passenger traffic is not sufficient to justify them in running a train at the time suggested, and demand a large additional subsidy if such a train is run for postal purposes. The service in the district referred to is already carried on at a considerable loss to the revenue, and I regret that I should not be justified in adding to the loss by sanctioning additional payment to the Railway Company for additional service.

Mr. E. BARRY: Will the right hon. Gentleman consent to receive a deputation on the subject?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Yes; I am quite prepared to receive a small deputation on the matter.

FEES ON MAGISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Clerk of the Peace for Essex recently charged the 16 new Justices of the Peace a fee of £2 12s. 6d. each, and that the charge was made under the authority of a Resolution of the Essex Court of Quarter Sessions; and whether he can say for whose benefit these fees are imposed, and to what expense (if any) the Clerk of the Peace or the County is put when newly-appointed Magistrates take their seats?

Mr. ASQUITH: Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this question. The statement in the first paragraph is correct. I am not able to give any definite or adequate answer to the second paragraph. The whole question of the legality of these fees and of their amount has been for some time under consideration, and I am about to issue a Circular to the Clerks of the Peace, which, I hope, may lead to a more satisfactory system.

PAYMENTS TO MILITARY PENSIONERS.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider whether arrangements can be made by which pensions to soldiers and Reservists may be paid weekly or monthly by postal orders or otherwise instead of quarterly at a few centres?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The hon. Member does not seem to be aware that the payments to pensioners and to men of the Reserve are now made at the post offices near which they reside. The payments to pensioners are made quarterly in advance. Supposing the Post Office would be willing to undertake the labour of monthly payments, the additional cost to the State would be great; it has been estimated to amount to at least £20,000 a year. But to the pensioners themselves the change would be a serious hardship, apart from the multiplied formalities which would be imposed upon them. Pensions being paid in advance, an increased number of payments involves, of course, a permanent postponement of the pension; and it is known that it would be most distasteful to the great majority of the men. Moreover, each man now receives pensions for a period extending on the average to six and a-half weeks after his death. With monthly payments this boon would be reduced to a fortnight's pension. It does not seem desirable to inflict these disadvantages upon the vast majority of pensioners, who, I am glad to say, are steady, sober, and well-conducted men, for the sake of a few who cannot resist temptation. Besides, an increase of the number of opportunities of temptation would be a doubtful benefit even to these. As regards the Reserve men, apart from the deferred portion of their pay, which is issued annually, the quarterly payment is 30s., and it hardly seems expedient to divide this into three sums of 10s.

MR. BARTLEY : Then do I understand the right hon. Gentleman that he thinks it is a better arrangement for the pensioners to get three months' pay down in a lump sum than to receive a smaller sum at shorter periods ? Would it not benefit the men to receive it in smaller sums ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : If a man receives a three months' pension in advance it must be a greater benefit to him than if he were paid monthly. As a matter of fact, we have received no complaint from the men themselves as to these quarterly payments. The evil, such as it is, is confined to a few men who are unable to resist the temptation to drink.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the present system of paying Reservists prevents men moving about from place to place to secure employment, with the result that they are driven to low-class lodging-house keepers, and small beer shopkeepers, who lend them money at exorbitant rates of interest ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I cannot see how the mode of paying Reserve men can interfere with them seeking employment. The money is paid at the post office nearest to a man's residence, and if he changes that residence even two or three times in one year he can intimate the change of address to the paying officer. We have no complaints of any difficulty in this matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS : Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to appoint a small Departmental Committee to hear the views of the London Army Reserve men, who feel keenly on the subject ?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN : I will see whether there is room for the investigation of such a Committee. Indeed, I should be glad to constitute myself a Committee.

STRIKE AT THE BOOTLE JUTE COMPANY'S WORKS.

COLONEL SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle) : In the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University (Sir J. Gorst), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a strike at the Bootle Jute Company's works in Liverpool, and to the allegation of the *employés* that the competition of Her Majesty's prisons in sack-making renders the employment of women at the wages heretofore paid no longer possible ; and whether he will inquire into the prices at which sacks made in Her Majesty's prisons are sold, and so regulate the price, if necessary, as to prevent the wages of other workers being forced down by the undue competition of prison labour to a starvation point ?

MR. ASQUITH : According to the information furnished, the strike was due to a threatened reduction of the hours of labour and to some disputes between the women and their employers as to the time at which their wages were paid. With regard to the competition of Her Majesty's prisons in sackmaking, I am informed by the Chief Constable of Bootle that about a fortnight prior to this strike the manager of the Company made arrangements with the Governor of Walton Gaol to make about 1,000 sacks per week, which were required for a special purpose handsewn. The manager alleges that the work at the prison, between extra carting, packing, &c., costs him about 50 per cent. more than the bag-making at his own works, which is all done by machinery. It is stated to be inconvenient to have this work done on the premises ; and, further, that such work is nowise in competition with the work done at the mill.

IPSWICH BURIAL BOARD.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the action of the Rector of St. Matthew's parish, Ipswich, who, as Chairman of a Vestry meeting, refused to entertain a demand for a poll in the election of members to sit on the Burial Board of the town for that parish, he himself being one of the candidates; whether he had a legal right to refuse a poll; and what remedy, if any, the parishioners have?

Mr. ASQUITH: The Chairman states that no demand for a poll was made, and as none was made he could not grant one. Questions were asked as to the right to demand a poll, but according to the Chairman no poll was in fact demanded by anybody. As to the legal right to refuse a poll, I may remind my hon. Friend that I have no authority over Vestries in their action with respect to the election of members to Burial Boards, and no opinion of mine can decide the question; but I can take it for granted that a poll can be legally demanded in such cases, inasmuch as the Burial Boards (Contested Elections) Act, 1885, provides for the expenses of taking such polls. Perhaps my hon. Friend will take this as an answer to the further questions he has put to me privately.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us what the Vicar said in answer to the questions about a poll? Did he say there was no right to demand one?

Mr. ASQUITH: I cannot say.

INDIAN OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS.

Mr. H. PLUNKETT (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, of the official publications issued by the Indian Government and by the India Office for sale to the public, not more than 60 per cent. are to be found in the Library of the British Museum; and whether he will undertake to ensure a regular supply of a copy of each official publication which does not come under the provisions of "The Copyright Act, 1842," to the National Library?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): I am not aware that the facts are as stated in the hon. Member's question. Copies of all official publications issued by the Indian Government and sent home by them, and of all such publications issued by the India Office for sale to the public, are sent to the British Museum. Moreover, lists of all Indian Government publications are sent periodically to the British Museum Authorities in order that they may, if they think fit, apply for a copy of any work which, for whatever reason, has not been already supplied to them.

CRUELTY TO HORSES IN LONDON.

Mr. BROOKE ROBINSON (Dudley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the charge against William Meet, omnibus proprietor, on the 6th of March, at the Guildhall, for cruelty to his horses, when it appeared that he had on previous occasions been convicted of cruelty to his omnibus horses; and whether the attention of the authorities at Scotland Yard is called to cases where a person has been convicted more than once of cruelty, so that they may refuse in such cases to renew the licences?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am informed that charges of cruelty have often been preferred concerning horses coming from this yard, and the Magistrates invariably have a difficulty in ascertaining who is responsible. The answer to the second part of the question is in the affirmative. I am strongly of opinion that the law should be rigorously enforced in all these cases, and I have suggested to the Commissioner of the City Police that careful watch should be kept upon horses coming from this yard.

MALICIOUS BURNING AT CASTLEBAR.

Dr. R. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the claim for damages for alleged malicious burning made by Martin Conry, of Cairn, at the Presentment Sessions held in Castlebar in December last; whether he is aware that there was the clearest evidence to show that the burning was the result of an accident arising from the negligence of Conry's servant, and that the Head Constable of Police at Castlebar gave evidence to the effect that the burning was accidental and not malicious; whether the Presentment Sessions, composed of Magistrates and associated cesspayers, rejected the claim; if, notwithstanding, the Grand Jury of the county, with Lord John Browne as foreman, refused to hear the witnesses against the claim, and granted to Conry £40, which was about four times the amount of the damage done; and whether any steps can be taken to prevent the Grand Jury from so taxing the taxpayers?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand that the claim was rejected at Presentment Sessions held in November last, but that it is not the fact that the Head Constable was examined at this stage. The Sessions was composed of one Magistrate and three cesspayers. The claim was renewed before the Grand Jury, and on this occasion the Head Constable expressed the opinion that the fire was accidental. The Grand Jury, however, awarded compensation to the amount mentioned. The finding of the Grand Jury was about being traversed before the Judge of Assize, but his Lordship, I am informed, stated that as the Grand Jury were so unanimous in their finding he did not consider it a case to be inquired into by him.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Do the Grand Jury have to pay any portion of the money?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say.

COMPLAINT AGAINST A LURGAN POLICEMAN.

Mr. E. M'HUGH (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the conduct of Constable Sands, of Union Street Barracks, Lurgan, towards a respectable young man named Thomas Brady of that town; whether he charged Brady for obstructing a nurse who was wheeling a perambulator in Church Place, and on Brady remonstrating with the constable that he had done nothing of the kind, the constable beat him so severely with his baton, that Brady had afterwards to procure medical assistance to have the wound in his head stitched; whether he is aware that Sands then arrested Brady, and brought him before Mr. M'Glynn, J.P., who discharged him, and directed a summons to be issued; that the constable pursued Brady, re-arrested him, and brought him before another Magistrate, Mr. Crawford, J.P., by whom Brady was ordered to give sureties to appear at Petty Sessions; whether he is aware that the nurse swore at Petty Sessions that Brady did not obstruct her in any way; and whether he will make inquiries into the whole matter?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the constable remonstrated with Brady for pushing another man against the perambulator which contained a child; that some words passed between them; that Brady refused to give his name to the constable who, on proceeding to arrest Brady, received from him a blow in the mouth; that a hostile crowd collected, and that in the course of the *mêlée* the constable received very bad treatment. It is true that Brady had his head cut with the baton, but the constable also received several cuts about the face, and kicks on the body. The Magistrate referred to in the third paragraph ordered the prisoner to be discharged, but this the police refused to do, as his name was not known to them, and he declined to give it. The Magistrate named in the fourth paragraph was then sent for, and the accused admitted to bail. The fact is as stated in the fifth paragraph, but one of the prisoner's companions admitted having been pushed by Brady against the perambulator, and that Brady struck the constable first. Brady was unanimously convicted by a full Bench of Magistrates on the 20th of March, and fined 21s. and costs.

CANAL TOLLS.

Mr. WILSON-TODD (York, N.R., Howdenshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he could say when the Report of his Department on the classification of goods and Schedule of Tolls submitted by the Canal Companies will be laid before Parliament, and also when the proposed tolls are likely to come into force?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): The Draft Provisional Orders and Schedules of Tolls prepared by the Commissioner appointed by the Board of Trade are in a forward state, and I hope shortly to introduce Bills to confirm them. It will be proposed that the new tolls shall come into operation on January 1, 1895.

DISTURBANCES IN THE GWEEDORE DISTRICT.

Mr. BARTON (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to an attack, alleged to have been made upon a small body of police engaged on protection duty by a crowd of persons numbering several hundreds, on the 29th ultimo, in the Gweedore district, County Donegal, in which a Head Constable was rendered unconscious by wounds on the head and body, and a sergeant severely wounded; whether any other persons were injured; and whether any of the attacking party were identified by the police, and any steps taken to bring them to justice?

Mr. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.): Before the question is answered, I wish to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that the rev. gentleman referred to in this question is the same Rev. Mr. Nixon who acquired such a notoriety some years ago for carrying out wholesale and heartless evictions?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Is this district the same as has the unhappy notoriety of being the locality where District Inspector Martin was brutally murdered?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I believe it to be the same district, and I am informed that no district in Ireland has been more quiet since the time that that sad occurrence happened. I have received a Report of the occurrence referred to, the facts as to which are substantially as stated. The police were engaged on the occasion in protecting a process server who received injuries from the crowd, and the several members of the protecting party were also struck and more or less injured. No arrests were made by the police at the time, but they hope to be able to identify several of the persons implicated.

Mr. T. D. SULLIVAN: My question with reference to the Rev. Mr. Nixon has not yet been answered.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am quite unable to answer the question, because there is no name of any clergyman mentioned in the question, and I am therefore unable to identify the rev. gentleman he alludes to.

Mr. BARTLEY: Have I correctly understood the right hon. Gentleman's answer. He has said that no district in Ireland has been quieter since the murder of Inspector Martin had occurred. Does the right hon. Gentleman connect the death of Inspector Martin with the present quietness of the district?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I should have thought the meaning of my remarks would have been quite obvious to any fair-minded man. What I meant to imply was this: that at the time when the disastrous and criminal affray took place there was no doubt a great excitement in the district. That was, however, only a passing excitement, and since that time no district in Ireland has been more quiet.

THE IRISH EDUCATION ACT, 1892.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is yet in a position to state when he will introduce his Bill to remedy the defects in "The Irish Education Act, 1892;" and, if not, when will he be in a position to make the announcement?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am at present unable to say when I will introduce the Bill; it is ready, however, and will be printed in the course of a few days.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN RURAL DISTRICTS IN IRELAND.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the teachers of Irish National schools, at their Congress held last month, and also at their Congress of 1893, declared that the provisions for compulsory attendance at school under "The Irish Education Act, 1892," ought to be extended to the rural districts; and whether he intends to bring in a Bill this Session for the purpose of extending these provisions to rural districts?

Mr. J. MORLEY: My attention has been called to a resolution in favour of extending the provisions for compulsory attendance at schools to rural districts; but I am not prepared at present to bring in a Bill for this extension until the existing provisions of the Irish Education Act have been rendered more operative than we have yet been able to make them.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY TOLLS.

Mr. WRIGHTSON (Stockon-on-Tees): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, with reference to the decision on the complaint of Messrs. A. Simpson and Company, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, against the North Eastern Railway Company, as reported in the proceedings under Section 31 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888, whether he will explain on what grounds the rating therein described as sanctioned by the Board of Trade between the three northern grain ports and the Town of Sheffield is fixed at the uniform rate of 11s. 8d. per ton, when it is admitted that the Port of Stockton is 30 miles and 29 miles nearer Sheffield than Newcastle and Sunderland respectively, and is therefore by this uniform rate deprived of the geographical advantage of her position by 30 miles of rating; and whether the Board of Trade intends to allow this rating to continue to the disadvantage of the Stockton traders?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The hon. Member is in error in supposing that the uniform rate of 11s. 8d. per ton between the three Northern grain ports and the Town of Sheffield has been sanctioned by the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade have no power to sanction or to disallow such an arrangement. In replying to the complaint made by Messrs. A. Simpson and Company the Railway Company stated that they had grouped the three Ports mainly for public convenience. Whether in so doing the Company have or have not subjected the Port of Stockton to an undue preference in favour of Newcastle and Sunderland is a legal question upon which I can express no opinion.

CRUELTY TO SEAMEN.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the alleged ill-treatment of a seaman, named Larder, on board the British barque *Balkannah*, by Captains Roope and Johnstone, whilst on a voyage from Rio de Janeiro, which resulted in the death of Larder; whether he is aware that the man Larder was put on board the *Balkannah* against his will; and whether the Board of Trade propose to take any proceedings against Captains Roope and Johnstone for causing the death of Larder?

*Mr. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir. My attention has been called to the circumstances of the case to which my hon. Friend refers, and I am informed that the seaman in question is stated to have been put on board the *Balkannah* against his will. The whole circumstances have been laid before the Public Prosecutor, who advises me that no criminal proceedings with regard to the death of Leader (or Larder) can be successfully taken. The Board of Trade are, however, considering whether it is possible to deal with the certificates of any of the officers who were to blame. I may add that Roope and Johnstone (or Johnson) were recently summoned at Falmouth for assault and were fined.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: Is the House to understand that if a seaman is done to death on board a ship by a tyrannical captain there is no law in this country which will punish the captain for the act?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The Board of Trade brought the circumstances under the notice of the Public Prosecutor, and he advised that no criminal proceedings could be successfully taken.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that within the past three weeks two similar cases have occurred, and that no prosecution has taken place in either case. I want to know whether there is no law in this country which will give the same protection to a seaman on board a ship as is afforded to a landsman on shore?

Mr. DARLING (Deptford): Does not the law of murder and the law of manslaughter apply on board ship and give the same protection as on land?

Mr. MUNDELLA: There can be no doubt about that. What the Board of Trade have to do is to place all the evidence before the Public Prosecutor, and it is for him to determine whether he will proceed with a prosecution or not. If the hon. Member will furnish me with particulars of the two cases he has mentioned I will take care to see that they are thoroughly examined. There is no indisposition on the part of the Board of Trade to afford all possible protection.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): Is there any evidence that this man was done to death by the captain?

*Mr. MUNDELLA: The Public Prosecutor did not think that the evidence was sufficient to undertake proceedings.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: I do not attach any blame to the right hon. Gentleman for lack of duty in this respect, but, knowing the circumstances of the case, I ask why it is that an action cannot be taken against the captain when I know that the man has been done to death ?

[The question was not answered.]

COST OF PRIVATE BILLS.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that there is some difficulty in getting the London Streets and Buildings Bill and the Thames Conservancy Bill by the outside public; whether he is aware that the charge for those Bills is 6s. to 8s. respectively; and whether the Government can see its way clear to issue those Bills like Public Bills or as Parliamentary Papers ?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The Standing Orders of the House of Commons require all Private Bills to be printed and delivered at the Vote Office for the use of Members at the sole expense of the promoters. I am afraid I could not, in the interests of economy, recommend that such Bills should be printed at the cost of the taxpayer like Public Bills and Parliamentary Papers.

Mr. HOWELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these Bills propose to repeal certain Public Acts, and that therefore the public ought to be able to see them ?

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): Surely promoters who seek to repeal Public Acts should be compelled to print their Bills.

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I stated that the Standing Order required them to print and deliver the Bills at the Vote Office. But the question of the hon. Member refers to the outside public, and I do not see why the taxpayers of the country should be called upon to pay for the printing of the Bills.

Mr. HOWELL: On the first available opportunity I shall call attention to this matter.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Cannot a rule be laid down that these Private Bills should be sold to the public at the same rate as Public Acts ?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I do not think that could be done. I am told that the cost of printing the Bills referred to in the question works out in one case at 6s. a copy, and in the other at 8s.

Mr. J. Havelock Wilson

LABOURERS' COTTAGES AT NEWCASTLE WEST.

Mr. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in the Local Government Board not taking action on the proposed scheme of labourers' cottages promoted by the Newcastle West Board of Guardians; and will an Inspector be sent without delay to hold the usual inquiry under the Labourers Acts, and facilitate the object of the Guardians ?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the scheme of labourers' cottages promoted by the Newcastle West Board of Guardians was received by the Local Government Board on February 27 last. Proposals of this kind are taken in order of priority, and if the preliminaries prescribed by the Act are found to have been complied with by the Guardians, inquiries are arranged for at the earliest possible date. The present case is first on the list, and will be disposed of as quickly as possible. Two hundred and fifty-seven cottages have been already built in this Union, and the new scheme contemplates the erection of 71 more.

IMPORTS OF STRAW BOTTLE ENVELOPES.

Mr. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if it would be possible to grant a Return of the straw bottle-envelope imports to England, Scotland, and Ireland; and whether in such a Return particulars could be given of the respective quantities derived from the convict prisons of European States; produced by steam or water-power machinery; and made by peasantry as a cottage industry ?

***Mr. MUNDELLA**: It is impossible for the Board of Trade to furnish such a Return. Imports of straw bottle envelopes are not distinguished in the Customs Returns, and they know nothing of their mode of manufacture.

CESS AND STENT.

Mr. W. WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he has received intimation of a resolution unanimously passed by the Convention of Royal Burghs with regard to the taxes of cess and stent; if so, will the

Government shortly introduce the legislation necessary to give effect to it?

*Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I have received no such intimation, but, if it reaches me, the question whether there should be legislation will be duly considered.

FRAUDS IN THE MEAT TRADE.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, if a case were reported to him of a butcher selling frozen meat without any mark or description upon it as fresh English meat, he would cause a prosecution to be instituted under the Merchandise Marks Acts?

Mr. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, if the case were reported to him of a butcher selling foreign or colonial meat which was marked as English meat, or which, from the invoice given with it, might be inferred to be English meat, he would cause a prosecution to be instituted under the Merchandise Marks Acts?

Mr. MUNDELLA: Where foreign or Colonial meat is described in the invoice as "fresh English meat" there would seem to be no doubt that a false trade description is applied within the meaning of the Merchandise Marks Acts, and there would be no difficulty in any person or Association or Local Authority obtaining a conviction. Last week a case was reported in which the Ham and Bacon Curers' Association obtained convictions and penalties where Danish bacon was marked Wiltshire. Previous convictions had been obtained in Liverpool and elsewhere. The Board of Trade would consider the expediency of taking proceedings if a suitable case was laid before them, and they were advised there was a reasonable prospect of conviction; but it would be much easier for proceedings to be taken in the locality by those locally interested than by the Board of Trade.

Mr. JEFFREYS: May I ask, in reference to the bacon case in which the right hon. Gentleman says a prosecution was successfully carried on—bacon is not always marked by some distinctive mark. My question is, whether a prosecution cannot be taken against a butcher who sells foreign meat for English without marking it, and whether that is not the reason why we have introduced a Bill for the marking of foreign meat?

Mr. MUNDELLA: Bacon and ham are not marked, but a label or invoice are put upon them. There is no penalty attached to the selling of goods that are not marked, but if they are falsely described a person can be prosecuted.

Dr. FARQUHARSON: May I ask whether, if a proper case is brought before the right hon. Gentleman, his Department will undertake the expense of carrying out the prosecution?

Mr. MUNDELLA: Suppose a case occurs in Aberdeenshire, would it not be very much better that the Aberdeenshire farmers should prosecute, than that they should ask the Board of Trade to come to Aberdeenshire and prosecute for them?

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I wish to ask whether there is anything in the Statute, or in the Regulations made under it at the time when the right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) was at the Board of Trade, which debars the Board of Trade from prosecuting in cases brought to their notice by individuals; and whether in the case of the false marking of files, in which an entire trade was interested, the prosecution was not instituted by the Board of Trade when the right hon. Member for Bristol was President?

Mr. MUNDELLA: There is nothing to debar the Board of Trade from taking up a prosecution of this kind. If a good case is laid before them, and it is found that the parties cannot do it better themselves, it is the duty of the Board of Trade to prosecute. In regard to prosecutions in the file trade, which took place first under the right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) and afterwards in my own time, that was a case in which a number of workmen were interested, but they were unable to meet the expense necessary to carry it to a successful conclusion, and the Board of Trade took it up. We would do that in the case of any general trade placed under similar circumstances. But the House will agree that in the case of false marking of meat it is better to take action on the spot than to come to the Board of Trade and without evidence to ask them to get up a case.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether in the Act of Parliament amending the Merchandise Marks Act which authorises such prosecutions to be taken by the Board of Trade, and in the Regulations which were laid down by the Board of Trade on the subject of prosecutions under it, a distinction was not drawn between cases which affected a whole trade and cases which affected individuals, it being considered that a prosecution could be undertaken by the Board of Trade in the first case and not in the second, and whether he will not apply that rule which was acted upon by the Board of Trade in the case of the file trade to the meat trade also?

Mr. MUNDELLA: In regard to the power of prosecution, a great deal of discretion is given to the Board of Trade. An obligation does not lie on the Board of Trade to prosecute. It is only in cases where the Board of Trade are of opinion that the public interest will be better served by their taking up the case than by their leaving it to the individual that they prosecute. I think in the case of marking by a false description it would be better that some initiative should be shown by the parties interested, than that they should come to the Board of Trade. I have not yet heard of a single prosecution.

Dr. FARQUHARSON: May I ask, in regard to the Aberdeenshire case, whether if I or any other agriculturist in the North of Scotland bring a case to his notice, not in the locality but in London, he will prosecute and bear the expenses of the prosecution?

Mr. MUNDELLA: If it is shown to me that the agriculturists of the North are unable to pay the expenses of a prosecution, the Board of Trade will be glad to do so.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): May I ask whether it is not a fact that in all parts of Scotland there is a public prosecutor who prosecutes in all these cases?

[No answer was given.]

THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN IRISH LAW COURTS.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any of the Magistrates or Clerks of Petty Sessions in the Provinces of Connaught and Munster, and in the Counties of Donegal, Derry,

Tyrone, Armagh, and Cavan, speak Irish, and how many; whether a procedure is adopted to secure that persons who, speaking Irish only, charged with offences have those charges and the evidence explained to them; have any civil proceedings been taken against or by Irish-speaking persons in recent times at Petty Sessions; how many persons speaking Irish only have been confined in gaols, lunatic asylums, and Unions; how many are now confined therein; and how many of the officials in gaols, asylums, and Unions speak Irish?

Mr. J. MORLEY: There are no official records containing the detailed information required by this question. The Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks informs me, however, that in 497, out of a total number of 606, Petty Sessions districts in Ireland no Irish-speaking persons have been charged with offences within the memory of the present clerks, and that in the remaining 109 districts provision is made for an interpreter, when the services of one are required, by the employment of a person duly sworn so to act. Provision is made by the Act 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 116, for the employment and remuneration of Irish interpreters at Assizes, and by the 14 & 15 Vict., c. 57, at Quarter Sessions. There is no statutory provision applicable to Petty Sessions, but where necessary, and on application, I have been informed the Crown provides an interpreter in criminal cases. Paid interpreters are rarely required, however, at Petty Sessions, as there are usually present in Court persons who volunteer to interpret upon the occasion arising.

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, having regard to the fact of the Ordnance Survey being an exclusively civil employment, and not by any means a military one, he would consider the advisability to work the Department on the same lines as other extensive printing establishments, by abolishing excessive boy labour, by adopting the "fair wages" Resolution, and by employing a staff of efficient lithographic draftsmen and writers, who would undertake the work at once, and execute it in an expeditious manner, thereby accelerating the work and superseding the system at present adopted by the Department?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. Gardner, Essex, Saffron Walden): I am afraid I can only refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the question he addressed to me on this subject on the 24th of August last; but I may perhaps add that the present staff of lithographic draftsmen and writers is entirely efficient, and that as the work is kept up to the publication stage without any undue delay there is no necessity for any special acceleration of it.

SCHULL AND SKIBBEREEN LIGHT RAILWAY.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, although the Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway is now extended almost to the water's edge, the engines cannot run over the new sections of the connecting rails; whether it is necessary to obtain an Act of Parliament for that purpose; and whether, meantime, preliminary permission will be granted, so that the railway may be available for the approaching fishing season?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am advised that further legislation to effect the particular object mentioned in the question is not necessary. Under Clause 33 of the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway and Light Railway Order, 1892, it is competent for the Committee of Management of that line to enter into an agreement with the promoters as to the maintenance and working of the Schull Pier Extension Line.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEE)—TRADE, &c.

Sir J. MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had nominated the following Members to serve on the Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufacture:—Mr. Addison, Mr. Arch, Mr. Barran, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bonsor, Mr. Boord, Mr. Brown, Mr. Burt, Mr. Caine, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Channing, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Colman, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Baron Henry De Worms, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Everett, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Hayes Fisher, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, Mr. Gilliat, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Gourley, Sir Reginald Hanson, Mr. Harrington, Sir John Hibbert, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Howell, Mr. Jackson, Sir James Joicey, Mr. Long, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Macartney, Dr. M'Donnell, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Murray, Mr. Naoroji, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Oldroyd, Sir Richard Paget, Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Power, Mr. Randell, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Roche, Mr. Round, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Thomas Shaw, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Solicitor General, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. Tomlinson, Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Richard Webster, Mr. Webster, Sir James Whitehead, Mr. Stephen Williamson, Mr. C. H. Wilson, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), and Mr. Young.

LAW, &c.

Sir J. MOWBRAY further reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had nominated the following Members to serve on the Standing Committee for the consideration of all Bills relating to Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure which may, by Order of the House, be committed to such Standing Committee:—Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Beach, Mr. Bolitho, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Bryce, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Carson, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Curzon, Mr. Darling, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Dillon, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. Tatton Egerton, Mr. John Ellis, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Evans, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Herbert Gardner, Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Haldane, Sir Charles Hall, Sir Edward Harland, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Staveley Hill, Mr. Samuel Hoare, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Knox, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Lockwood, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. Matthews, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Edward Morton, Mr. Mount, Mr. Mulholland, Mr. Muntz, Mr. William O'Brien, Sir Charles Pearson, Mr.

Pickard, Mr. Picton, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Bryn Roberts, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir George Russell, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Storey, Mr. Taylor, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Webb, Mr. Whitmore, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £1,771,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of the Personnel for Shipbuilding, Repairs, and Maintenance, including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895."

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, that when the Navy Estimates were laid before the House a promise was made on behalf of the Government that there should be full discussion at a later stage in consideration of the Estimates being quickly passed for the convenience of the public Service, and, therefore, if in the course of his remarks he travelled beyond the immediate Vote before the House, he hoped the Chairman, following the usual practice in the case of a mutual arrangement between the two sides of the House, would allow him some latitude. The Home Secretary had recently made a speech in the country, when he was endeavouring to catch votes, in the course of which he alluded to what he was pleased to term—

> "The action of the predecessors of the present Government in regard to naval policy."

The right hon. Gentleman said that they

> "Had built a number of additional ships without making any provision for additional men to man them;"

and added—

> "If we indulge in such expenditure we shall neither conceal the amount of it nor transfer the burden to succeeding years."

He had hoped that the Debate might have been kept outside Party and political considerations, and he regretted that, for the purpose of catching a few votes in a Scotch constituency, the right hon. Gentleman should have thought it his duty to go to the country and make these assertions on the eve of the polling when no reply could be made to him. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty had made a similar statement in a Northern town, and neither gentleman could have informed himself of what the late Admiralty administration had done, or of what the present Government was doing. As to the charge of not providing for additional men, the Estimates of 1886-87, the last year of the Liberal Administration at that time in Office, provided for 61,400 men, and the Estimates of 1892-93, prepared under the guidance of the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex, provided for 74,100 men, an increase of nearly 13,000. As to the charge of concealing expenditure, it was clear that the right hon. Gentleman had not opened this year's Estimates. For the first time for many years the Estimates failed to give the cost of the various vessels for the building of which the House was asked to vote money. The information was withheld even in respect to vessels contracted for as long ago as last December. Further, it would have been fairer and more accurate if the right hon. Gentleman and the Civil Lord, in speaking of the transfer of burdens to succeeding years, had added that within the year after the last of the vessels built under the Naval Defence Act was completed, every sixpence spent upon those vessels would have been provided for. The present Government, in fact, would not have any burden cast upon it to pay for the ships built by the late Government. The charge had already been laid on the taxpayers. He thought he would be able to show that the policy of casting the burden upon future years was the policy which had been adopted throughout the present Estimates. He was sorry to have to repeat some of the points he mentioned on the last occasion the subject was before the House. The right hon. Gentleman who answered for the Department in this House was good enough to describe the speeches made before he rose as mist and drizzle. He (Mr. Forwood) was sorry that the sunshine of the right hon. Gentleman's eloquence did not dispel that mist and drizzle. He had asked upon what standard the Board of Admiralty had based their present provision for new ships. Was it based upon naval expert opinion, or upon the exigencies of finance? He could not think it was based upon naval expert opinion. He could not believe that responsible officers in high positions would take to-day so different a view of the strength at which the British Navy ought to be maintained from what they took five or six years ago. Comparing what the Government proposed to-day with the relative strength laid down by expert naval officers in 1888, which the British fleet should maintain in order to cope with a combination of the Fleets of two great European Powers, he found an inferiority of four first-class battleships, nine second-class battleships, eight first-class cruisers, and five second-class cruisers. He knew they were assured that in the succeeding years there was to be an addition to the programme, but what that addition was to be was carefully concealed from that House. They had this fact established—that if they were to raise the standard of the British Navy up to that position considered necessary by naval officers five or six years ago, it would be necessary to add to the number already provided for those vessels he had just referred to, and they would cost beyond the figures already placed before the country something like £14,000,000. He would, then, ask what provision had been made in order to enable the Government to carry out the incomplete programme which they had actually laid before the country? He had taken some trouble in going through the Estimates for the purpose of obtaining an answer to his question, and he had been compelled to make an estimate for himself as to the probable cost of the new vessels that were about to be constructed. He found that the dockyard ships now in course of construction would cost £7,750,000. To meet that expenditure the Government took in this year's Estimates £2,318,000. If a proportionate rate of progress was to be made with these vessels as was made with those built under the Naval Defence Act, the sum required in 1895-6, instead of being £2,318,000, would be £3,150,000, or an increase on the present Estimate of about £800,000 on dockyard ships alone. He attributed the unequal proportion of expenditure in the present and future years largely to the delay in proceeding with the three first-class battleships and in commencing others. Had those vessels been advanced, as it was intended they should be in 1893-4, there would have been a fairer and more equitable distribution of the expenditure on this Vote. The cost of the two battleships and certain smaller ships that were to be built by contract would be just under £5,000,000. For pushing on these ships the Government only provided in the present Estimates a sum of £874,000. If these vessels were to make substantial progress, instead of £874,000 provided in 1894-5 they would require at least £2,500,000 in 1895-6. Taking the total in the shipbuilding programme of the Government for 1894-5, the amount they proposed to expend, and the amount that must be spent upon them in 1895-6, he found that for 1894-5 £4,500,000 in round figures was included in the Estimates; whereas in 1895-6, if proper progress in their construction were to be made, they would have to find no less than £5,670,000, or an increase of £1,170,000. If that was not concealing the real financial state of the matter from the country, and if that was not postponing expenditure to the future, he really did not know the meaning of the words. But this increase on the Shipbuilding Vote was only the beginning of the increase, for they were promised by the Secretary to the Admiralty that next year there would be an additional programme. If that further programme was to be one intended to raise the strength of the Navy at all to the standard to which it was raised under the Naval Defence Act, there must be a very considerable additional expenditure next year. He could not put that at less than £1,000,000, and he believed the new construction next year would be £2,000,000 in excess of that which was provided this year. One reason given for the position in which the Board of Admiralty found themselves to-day was the excessive expenditure sprung upon them in regard to the cost of new torpedo-boat destroyers. He attached some weight and importance to this point. These torpedo-boat destroyers, of which 43 were to be built at a cost of £1,500,000, of which £1,229,000 was included in the Estimates of next year, were entirely a new departure in naval shipbuilding. Shipbuilding experts in the House would know that one of the latest modern inventions was tubulous boilers. They had been used in France in ships of the *Belleville* type with fair results for some years, and he had no reason to suppose that in time they would not develop into such a form and character as to be used on a large scale in Her Majesty's Navy. But he thought that before the country was committed to so large an expenditure on a class of vessel fitted with a new description of boiler it would have been better if they had had some of these vessels tested under all sorts of conditions, to see if those boilers really answered the expectations formed of them. He would not hold back in the matter of experiments. No doubt in one or two of these vessels very fast speeds would be maintained; and he hoped they would bear the hard wear and tear under all circumstances. This, however, had yet to be ascertained, and he thought the Government should not have ordered 42 of these boats until a good test of them had been obtained. He knew it would be said that the French Government, or or some other nation, had gone largely into this class of vessels. It was very necessary, undoubtedly, to take care that their Navy was provided with vessels fully equal to the most modern requirements; but they were a class of vessel which could be built in a comparatively short time, and it would, in his opinion, have been far better to have devoted a good proportion of the money set aside for these torpedo-boat destroyers to pushing on the large battleships, which took three or four years to complete. He might mention that he had desired to put one of these tubulous boilers for experimental purposes into a merchant vessel carrying passengers; but the Board of Trade had, so far, declined to grant a passenger certificate for that boiler as being safe. He was bound to say that Lloyd's had consented to the boiler being introduced, but the Board of Trade held aloof; so that they had one Department of the Government declining to allow a boiler of this description to be put into a merchant vessel, while another Department—the Admiralty—were putting them wholesale into those vessels on which they depended for the security and welfare of the country. Another reason why there must be a large growth in their Estimates was that the present Board declined to take the warning of the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) last year—that if they pushed vessels on to completion they would find themselves compelled, if they wanted to keep the same number of men employed at the docks, to make a greater demand for material; and the present Estimates showed this, for, although they were employing 500 fewer men, and the wages bill was £25,000 less than last year, the quantity of material and contract work necessary to be purchased to give employment to the smaller number of men was £750,000 more than last year. As to the unfair burden which it was said the late Government had thrown upon the future, he found from the Auditor General's Report of 1892-93 Estimates, which had just reached their hands, that £503,000 provided for that year was left unspent by their successors, and but for the Naval Defence Act that sum would have had to be returned to the Exchequer at the end of the year, and then be levied in new taxation in the present year. But that £503,000 did not represent all the surplus supplied by the late Government and unspent by their successors. The stock of naval stores purchased out of the fund the late Government had left had increased in 12 months by no less a sum than £100,000, while the stock of victualling stores had increased by £50,000, and the Admiralty had also been able to undertake further works without additional demands upon the Exchequer. Therefore, this statement of the late Government having thrown a heavy burden on their successors would not bear a minute's investigation. In the present Estimates the Admiralty provided a sum of £2,920,000 for contract work, of which £1,227,000 was for propelling machinery. The Government had discarded the system of the Naval Defence Act, under which, if contractors did not earn the money which the House of Commons had voted during the current year, the balance was available to pay contractors during the year following. It was impossible to estimate that contractors would earn the whole sum in one twelvemonth, and there would be a large amount to be surrendered to the Treasury in the next year. He would now deal with another point which he considered of considerable importance, and that was the employment of Indian troopships. These ships occupied something like 1,600 feet of quay space. Now the Government were asking for an increase in the dock accommodation, and he thought that before they embarked on this large expenditure and on the expenditure in repairing these troopships, they should consider whether they could not save this valuable quay space. Every sixpence that we could save the revenue of India was also of vast importance at the present date. He had asked a question as to the comparative cost of carrying troops in merchant vessels and in these troopships, and the answer which he had received was that the merchant vessel, ton for ton, carried fewer adults, and therefore there was less overcrowding, while the cost was £7 18s. 4d. per head, as compared with £12 0s. 1d. by the Indian troopships. His right hon. Friend had then gone on to say that since the number of the latter had been reduced from five to four, the cost had been reduced to £9 9s. per head. The right hon. Gentleman had said, further, that the hiring of the merchant troopship, which was a vessel belonging to the Cunard Company, was at an exceptionally low figure; but he (Mr. Forwood) would from his own experience say that that vessel was obtained at an abnormally high price, and that if the Admiralty had promised not a period of employment of two months, but the period during which that merchant vessel had been engaged, the hire would not have been within 25 per cent. of what the Government paid. If the right hon. Baronet would give the Peninsular and Oriental and other important Companies trading to India an opportunity of carrying the troops the Government would get the troops carried out at £7 per head, whereas under the present system of their troopship service it cost altogether something like £13 per head. By adopting the system he suggested, the Government would effect a saving of £6 per head, and the troops, instead of being crowded up in the way they were now, would be carried out in detachments of smaller numbers at greater speed and with much more satisfaction to all concerned. It might be said that they had a number of naval men employed in these ships. He said that when they were rather put to it to obtain a sufficiency of men to man their vessels in the Fleet, it was not good policy to lock up their blue-jackets in carrying troops to India, because whilst employed in such service they did not gain that experience which it was absolutely necessary they should gain if they were to be employed in these ships of war. He hoped they should see very shortly the gradual termination of the system of carrying troops by Indian troopships, and the system adopted of carrying men to and from India by merchant vessels. There was another point upon which he should like to say one or two words. They were asked to largely increase the number of seamen for the manning of the Fleet. No one would doubt the propriety of the Government's proposal in that respect, and he was sure it had been cordially welcomed by the House. But they should take care that when they got the men that they gave them and the officers the fullest opportunity of learning their business and gaining sea experience. This country was very much exercised a few months ago by the return of one of their finest ironclads after encountering a terrible gale in the Bay of Biscay, and the first impression upon the minds of the country was that they had an unseaworthy and unsafe vessel; that they had spent millions of money upon this and other sister ships, and that this money, as many people thought, had been almost wasted. Happily, since that statement appeared in the Press, they had had from the very distinguished and able man who presided over the Constructive Department of the Admiralty a Paper upon the performance of that ship at sea, and they had had, in very simple language, the fact brought out that the periods of the swell of the waves in the trough of which this ship proceeded were such as to impart to her her maximum rolling propensity, and that if the commanding officer had pointed her in the direction she was going she would have been as steady as a rock. Later on, when a gale sprung up, they found the ship was overwhelmed with the sea; her hatches, which had been battened down, were broken open; her ventilators opened, and the water found its way into the stokeholes. The explanation given of the vessel's putting back was that the Captain was afraid there was not sufficient coal on board. As a matter of fact, at the time she began to put back she had double the quantity of coal on board that was necessary to carry her to her destination. He repeated what he had said in this House, and elsewhere, that what they wanted was more experience on the part of the officers of the vessels of which they were going to be put in command. It was not fair to take an officer out of a moderate-sized ship and put him in responsible command straight away of one of these monster ironclads. They must give an opportunity to the officer as well as the crew to know from experience what these vessels did in the seaway. He would give the Committee some facts, so that they might form an idea of the amount of experience the present officers and seamen of the Navy had an opportunity of obtaining. They had a training squadron in which some 1,500 boys were trained, in the training ships or hulks at the ports, into seamen. He was only taking one year's operations. Of these 1,500 boys, the training ships accommodated only 408, so that scarcely one-third of the boys who were trained for the sea at very considerable expense had an opportunity of going to sea in the training ships. He was not sure whether this was the best form of training, and whether it was not better that the boys should be buffetted about in larger vessels, and their duties learned in the vessels in which they would be called upon to fight in case of war. These 408 youths went to sea in the training ships in the fairest weather and in the pleasantest latitudes. The vessels had both sailing and steaming power, and in bad weather they went under steam. These 408 youths out of the 1,500 had only 150 days' experience in the course of the year on the blue water, and the rest of the time they occupied in the ports. What opportunity was there afforded to these young men, therefore, to acquire the art of seamanship? Again, taking six vessels in the Mediterranean Fleet and the Channel Squadron—and these were typical of the rest—he found that the average number of days on which these six ships were out of harbour in one twelvemonth was 80. That meant that they were less than one-fourth of their time at sea. Of those 80 days, they were only 48 days under steam, the average speed at which they proceeded when under steam being barely eight knots. How was it possible they could give their officers fair experience of real sea-going work if they had only 48 days a year under steam? How were they likely to gain from such limited service that experience that would stand them in good stead when they were compelled to undertake the work of dealing with large and heavy ships, which proceeded at a high rate of speed and under such circumstances as would arise in the case of a war? There was another point he should like to mention, and that was the proposal to enlist in the sea service 800 men from the Royal Naval Reserve as permanent or continuous hands in the Royal Navy. There was no one more anxious than he to see the bonds of union between the Mercantile and Royal Navy drawn closer together. He believed that the closer the fellowship they established between the two Services the better it would be for both Services and decidedly the better for the nation. This, he thought, was a very opportune time for looking this matter fairly and squarely in the face. They were calling upon the men from the Mercantile Navy to come and serve as continuous service men on ships of war. As further new ships were required to be built, undoubtedly they should have to look for the manning of the ships more to the Mercantile Navy than they had done in the past. He was sorry to say that, in his opinion, the Mercantile Marine, as the reserve or nursery of the English Fleet, was not improving. He thought the education and training of their modern mercantile seamen was not what it used to be, and as steamers increased year by year the opportunity of training men through the Mercantile Marine for the Royal Navy would grow less and less. Steamers did not take apprentices, the boys they took being for the purpose of looking after the cabins and mess-rooms, so that they could not learn the duties of seamen on board such vessels. The supply of British seamen for the Mercantile Service would become a burning question some day, and had the President of the Board of Trade been present he should have appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to allow the Committee he was going to appoint to also inquire into the means of the better supply and training of men for the Mercantile Marine. Formerly compulsory apprenticeship was enforced, and every shipowner had to take a certain number of apprentices, according to the tonnage of his vessel. For example, when the tonnage of this country was only 3,000,000, the number of apprentices was nearly 16,000. To-day, when the tonnage of the country was 10,000,000, the number of apprentices enrolled was only 2,200, showing that absolutely there was no proper nursery or provision being made for the Mercantile Navy. Another point worthy of notice was the growth of the employment of foreigners in the British Mercantile Navy, and he was bound to say that that largely arose from the growing difficulty of finding experienced and sober men to man British ships. In 1860 the number of foreigners was 14,000, or about 9 per cent. ; last year there were 31,000 foreigners, or 16 per cent. In addition to that, there had been an increase in the last five years in the employment of Lascars of from 15,000 to 25,000. They had excellent training hulks in which to bring boys up for two years at their ports. The cost of training these boys was comparatively small ; but the question was whether, if the Navy could not absorb all the boys that were trained in these ships, the Admiralty might not train a larger number of boys who, after they had served their time, might join merchant ships under contract and strict regulations as to their return to the Navy from time to time for drill, and, in the case of war, for employment on warships ? If they got hold of a youth, trained him well, taught him good discipline, order, and cleanliness, they would make a far better boy for the Mercantile Marine, and they could bring that youth as a seaman back to the Navy whenever they wanted him, much better qualified to undertake the duties on board a ship of war than possibly could be any man at present picked up from a merchant ship. Now that a Committee was going to inquire into the manning of their ships, and the question of taking the Mercantile into the Royal Navy, he hoped they would go a step further, and see whether they could not devise some means of drawing closer together the Royal and Mercantile Navies, making one assist the other in the great duties they had to undertake. On the question of manning the Navy he would make an appeal on behalf of the engineers of the Mercantile Navy, and that was that the Royal Navy should offer a better and more satisfactory inducement to the engineers of the Mercantile Navy to become members of the Royal Naval Reserve. The officers of the Merchant Navy were given a retaining fee ; a certain number of them were allowed to serve their 12 months on board vessels of war, where they acquired experience valuable to the Navy and very valuable to those mercantile vessels for which they were engaged. But why offer no such inducements to the engineers of the Mercantile Navy ? He knew there was a feeling on the part of the Royal Navy that the men who were engineers of their great ships were not in that social position or of that status they would like to see in the ward-room or the gun-room of a vessel of war. He declared that they would find in the British Mercantile Marine as able and competent a body of men—accustomed to drive great ships at a high rate of speed under most trying conditions—as they could find anywhere, and men who, although they would take off their coats, go into boilers, and examine them themselves, were yet such men as one would be glad to meet at the captain's table. All he asked was that they would extend to the Mercantile engineers the same opportunities of joining the Royal Naval Reserve as they gave to the officers of the Mercantile Service ; and if they did, and if the Mercantile engineers were made to feel they were part and parcel of the naval defence of the country, he was convinced the Government would never stand in need of fit and competent engineers to manage the engines of their largest ships of war. The Navy was the Service upon which this country depended more than upon any other, and it was their bounden duty as trustees for the public to do their best to have that Service as efficient and satisfactory as possible.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough), speaking as one who knew something of the men who manned the Navy and the Mercantile Marine, ventured to say that the question which this country had to grapple with at the present time was not so much the ships as the question of getting efficient men to man the ships. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to throw great discredit upon their Mercantile sailors, but he altogether forgot to mention the fact that the British shipowners themselves were more responsible for the present state of affairs than anyone else. They had been told that the British sailor and fireman were not as steady and reliable as the foreigner. His experience was just the reverse. He had had some 20 years' experience of seamen, and he ventured to say that their seamen were steadier to-day than ever they were. In former days sailors used to sign their engagements on sailing ships about a week before the vessels were ready for sea, and they had what they called "a jolly good spree" for the week until the ship was ready to start. That was not the custom nowadays. The men did not sign until a few hours before the vessels were ready for sea, and he could personally testify that the seamen were steadier to-day than they were 20 years ago. It was not because of sobriety that foreign seamen were employed, but it was because the shipowners found the foreign seamen much cheaper. Every year no fewer than 5,000 or 6,000 British seamen were discharged in continental ports, who were receiving each about £4 per month, and foreigners were shipped in their places by the British shipowners at the rate of £3 10s. per month. The right hon. Gentleman had shown that whilst the tonnage of British ships had greatly increased the number of apprentices had decreased very considerably. Again, he lay the responsibility for that state of affairs at the door of the British shipowner. They charged a premium of £50 or £100 to boys who went to sea, and who were worked like slaves and received no wages, and in face of such a barrier they could not expect lads to go into the Mercantile Navy. The right hon. Gentleman said there were very few apprentices on board steamers, and that it was impossible for youths to learn the duties of seamanship in this class of vessels. He disagreed with the right hon. Gentleman as to that, for he believed that lads could learn the duties of sailors very well on board an ordinary steamer. British shipowners would get a large number of apprentices if they would pay them wages and learn to feed them properly, as they ought to be fed, so that they could do their work. The shipowners ought to assist the Government in providing a body of seamen of which the country might be proud. Unless they did that they had no right to complain that the Navy was not strong enough. With regard to the conveyance of troops, he hoped the contracts would not be placed in the hands of the Steamship Companies, as the right hon. Gentleman had suggested, seeing that those Companies did nothing to strengthen the Navy by the improvement of their own service. The treatment seamen got in the Royal Navy was not such as to encourage men to join. They were led to believe that their clothes were found by the Admiralty, but that was altogether a mistake. The men had to purchase their own outfit. The Government ought to pay for outfits and not take the cost of them out of the wages of the men. That grievance would have to be remedied before mercantile jacks would rush into the Royal Navy. Then with reference to the food, when merchant seamen complained of their food the owners told them that it was better than that of the men in the Navy. That was true, but it did not show that it was satisfactory in the Mercantile Marine. In the Navy the men continually complained of having to spend a considerable amount of their wages in food. It was about time the Admiralty remodelled their provision scale. It appeared that the old scale of 30 or 40 years ago was still in force. It was an important consideration for the Admiralty, who spent £200 or £300 in making a man efficient, that as soon as his 10 years were up he was glad to leave the Service and go elsewhere. It would, perhaps, be a surprise to some hon. Gentlemen to hear that the American Navy was largely composed of men who had left the English Navy. There could be only one reason for that, and that was that the conditions of service were better. Then there was the question of promotion. There ought to be nothing to prevent a man from rising from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest. That was possible in the Mercantile Marine, and he ventured to say that mercantile officers would compare favourably with those of the Royal Navy. The time had come when some alteration in that respect should be made. It was a question that would have to be dealt with at an early date. The Admiralty had been advertising for men to transfer from the Mercantile Marine into the Royal Navy, and he understood that not more than 12 had been secured in more than 12 months. They might build ships, but what use would they be if there were no men to man them? From where were the men to come? There were 10,000 first-class Reserve men, but it might be reckoned that half of them would be away when war broke out. Were the merchant vessels to be left in the hands of foreigners? The Board of Trade Returns gave the number of foreign seamen employed in the British Mercantile Marine as 30,000. He ventured to say the number was nearer 45,000, and if hon. Members would go to the Mercantile Marine offices they would see that eight out of every ten seamen who signed on were foreigners. It would be a sorry day for this country if we had to depend for our food supply upon foreigners. A large number of lads would be only too pleased to join the Mercantile Marine in order to learn the trade of a sailor provided that, after they had served their apprenticeship, they were treated as sailors and not as labourers. In the large shipbuilding yards of the country the very best of our seamen were to be found working as labourers for 21s. and 22s. a week; and if in the Navy the conditions of service were better—if men were not required at 4 o'clock in the morning to scrub the decks—they would not be so eager to leave the Service.

Admiral FIELD: I never heard of a man being required to scrub decks at 4 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON said, that he and other Members of the House knew the contrary. They could tell a very different story to the hon. and gallant Admiral, and such treatment would have to be altered. Reasonable conditions would have to be given to the men, and then they might expect to have a good body of merchant seamen ready to volunteer into the Navy. He would also suggest to shipowners who were Members of the House that they should endeavour to give the British sailor a chance of earning his living, and the British sailor would then show his gratitude by being prepared to defend his country in time of war.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said that, whatever else the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken knew about matters pertaining to the sea, he had not a very intimate acquaintance with the internal economy of a man-of-war. He agreed, however, with the hon. Member in thinking that the time was rapidly approaching when Parliament would have closely to inquire into the condition of the Mercantile Marine to ascertain what were the causes which had brought such large numbers of foreigners into the Service, and to see whether some of the conditions might not be altered, so as to make the Mercantile Marine more popular with the people of our country. With reference to the construction of ships, he urged that the Admiralty should always call to their aid a committee of experts, and said that had this course been pursued in the past many grave mistakes would have been avoided. Three of these mistakes would have been avoided in the last 20 or 30 years. With such a committee existing the Admiralty would not have persistently adhered to the system of muzzle-loading guns when it had been proved time after time and year after year that breech-loading guns were much better. The second mistake was the building of low-freeboard ships. He turned to the third great mistake—and he begged the Committee to observe that he was only pointing out these things as an illustration of his argument that they should have a council of officers to whom to appeal. The third mistake was the construction of vessels like the *Admiral* class. He very much doubted whether a body of naval officers, assisted by naval architects, would ever have agreed to the construction of these ships. Their peculiarities had been pointed out time after time, and by such a council the arguments of his hon.

Friend opposite would have received the greatest attention. Another mistake was one which was not so well-known, and which was not so serious perhaps. It was a mistake that had been made even in recent years — putting in boilers too light for the vessels they were intended to drive. That was a point upon which a council of engineer officers, had they been appealed to, would have given sound advice. Taking these four cases, he thought he was justified in saying that they thoroughly marked the disadvantages they had experienced during the past 25 or 30 years in not having a council of professional officers from whom they could get the best professional opinion of the time. But, on contrary, the giving of advice had practically been confined to a small official hierarchy which, in the nature of the case, could not be so good and useful as that of a proper council. He did not mean to suggest that this committee or council should have anything to do with the details. He was speaking generally on broad principles. He did not know what the views of the present Government were, but he had offered the right hon. Gentleman opposite these arguments as founded on experience. Passing to the programme announced by the right hon. Gentleman in his speech, in introducing the Estimates, it included seven first-class battleships and a certain number of cruisers. No doubt it was presumptuous for one who had no recent professional experience to call in question the policy of constructing these ships. Yet he would venture to place before the Committee the reasons which had made him distrust—and which still made him distrust—the policy of building very large vessels instead of a smaller type of ship. The seven first-class battleships, he supposed, would cost £7,520,000, and the question was whether, for the advantage of the country and the security of the Navy, they could have employed that £7,520,000 better. He submitted that it would have been better to have had, say, 12 second-class ironclads of the *Barfleur* and *Centurion* class—vessels of an equal speed with the first-class ships, of an equal radius of action, and of equal sea-going capacity. These second-class ships were inferior in weight of guns and in thickness of armour, and in those two matters only could it be said that in any serious thing the second-class battleships were inferior to the first-class. Formerly our forefathers used to build the largest ship with the largest number of guns, confident that that ship would be well able to beat a smaller one. If the line of reasoning were the same to-day, he admitted that he should have no case. But he doubted whether that were true now. He thought it open to doubt whether there was such a great advantage in large guns over comparatively small ones. He would remind the Committee that there had been a curious, silent, change made in this matter, larger than any that was suggested now. They had entirely, and he thought very wisely, put on one side the 100-ton gun. They had come down to the gun of 67 tons. The 100-ton gun would strike a blow at the muzzle of 55 tons, whilst that now in use would strike a blow of 35 tons. That enormous change had been made, and he would suggest that they might go further, and descend from the 67-ton gun to guns of 30 or 32 tons without suffering any material or great loss. Why did he say this? Because now armoured parts for a ship were, comparatively speaking, limited. The principal batteries on either of the ships could be penetrated by any of the larger guns. They could be easily penetrated by the 30-ton gun, whilst the precision of that gun was the same as that of the 67-ton gun, perhaps better. The distance at which they could be fired was somewhat smaller; but he maintained that, considering the small amount of armour there was in our battleships, part of it being under water, and the heavier portion being confined to the turrets and redoubts, the very heavy guns were not essential and little would be lost if slighter ones were substituted. No doubt the arguments for and against the adoption of lighter guns were evenly balanced. He could only offer a general opinion. It was pretty much the same in the matter of defensive armour, and it was on the balance of argument that he depended. On that balance of argument he said that rather than have the seven first-class ships that the Government proposed to build, he would have 12 of the second-class battleships, designed by the same experts, and which he believed, so far as was known, had proved themselves desirable vessels. By almost a parity of reasoning, while he criticised the Admiralty in regard to their new battleships, he supported them in reference to their new cruisers. When they had built all the vessels they now proposed, the fleet would have been brought to the condition of a very formidable force, which, he thought, would be able to cope with any possible combination that could be brought against it. The Admiralty had been criticised a good deal for the action they had taken last year in delaying the construction of large battleships in order to accelerate the construction of torpedo-catchers. That policy had been criticised from two points of view. It had, first, been maintained that as a policy it was bad; and, secondly, it had been argued that the Admiralty had no right to divert the money given by the Department for the construction of special vessels to the construction of torpedo-catchers. So far as the question of policy was concerned, he agreed with the Admiralty. It had seemed to him for some years that the most formidable danger to which we were exposed in the case of a war with our neighbours across the Channel was that our ironclads would be exposed to the attacks of numerous torpedo-boats coming from a number of ports in the English Channel. This was really a grave danger, and one which the Admiralty could not be too highly commended for grappling with. It had been proved, he thought beyond doubt, that, at any rate at night, battleships could easily fall victims to torpedo-boats. If, therefore, it had been decided that the best way to avert this danger was to build vessels called torpedo-catchers, even though it might be somewhat questionable procedure to divert money from one purpose to another, he thought the policy pursued by the Admiralty was most highly to be commended. They must all assume—it would be monstrous if they did not assume—that at this moment the Admiralty had prepared some plan by which, in the event of war breaking out, they would be able to clear the torpedo-boats out of the various ports on the coast of France. He assumed that the Admiralty had some such plan in their pigeon-holes, and he asked whether, in connection with such a system, an essential feature would not be the use of much smaller ironclads than were built at present. Such small ironclads might form coast defence vessels as well. He confessed that at one time he thought the building of coast defence vessels of comparatively small speed and comparatively sea-keeping duration was a mistake; but he confessed that he had rather come round to the conclusion that, in addition to the ordinary seagoing men-of-war, we ought to have a small type of ironclad, which should be kept almost altogether at home, but might be utilised partly for the purpose of clearing torpedo vessels out of French ports. He regretted that no such vessels had been designed by the Admiralty. Before he sat down he had one other subject to call attention to —in connection with the repairs of ships. Some of our old vessels, like the *Monarch* and the *Sultan*, were being repaired at great cost. He believed that something like £100,000 was being spent upon the *Monarch*, and yet we were not making a thorough job of it, because the old muzzle-loading guns were being kept on board that ship, and also on certain other ships, upon which large sums of money were being spent. Of course, the muzzle-loading gun was a good weapon, although it was inferior to the breech-loading gun, and the great objection to continuing to use it was that inconvenience and danger might arise from having various sorts of ammunition and charges in the reserves abroad. We had suffered from this difficulty even in recent years. A ship armed with these muzzle-loading guns might run short of ammunition whilst serving abroad, and might find on applying to the reserve for a fresh supply that there was none available for use in a muzzle-loading gun. He had been told, also, that some ships after coming home from a foreign station at the end of their commission, and being re-commissioned were sent abroad at once, only to be laid up for five or six months undergoing repairs at a foreign station. It seemed to him that when a ship at the end of her commission arrived in England it would be just as well to carry out any repairs that were necessary in this country. He understood the fact to be that, as a result of the prevalence of this system, instead of the whole of the fleet at a foreign station being fit for service, there might be two or three or four ships laid up for some months in the dockyard. The remaining point he had to mention was one, which he had brought forward before, and on which he had never yet succeeded in extracting much sympathy from the House of Commons. He would like to ask his right hon. Friend (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) to look down his list of ships, and see how much complication and trouble arose from the present system of nomenclature and also from the system of classing vessels. There were at present two kinds of first-class cruisers—namely, cruisers with belts and protected cruisers, and there were also second and third-class cruisers. He should like the Admiralty to apply to one of these classes of cruisers the old name of frigate, which had been associated with the Naval Service for 300 years. The frigates had utterly vanished from the Service, although the work which the old frigates did was exactly the work done by the cruisers. As to nomenclature, the Admiralty had got six or seven new ships to name, and he would respectfully appeal to the Government, in selecting names, not to confine themselves to adjectives which were in the dictionary, but to have recourse to great names, great deeds, and great things, all of which would be honoured by being placed on the sterns of the vessels of the British Navy. If this were done, as education advanced, sentiment, which always played its part, would assist in maintaining the loyalty of our sailors for the noble profession of the Navy.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said, he had thought it his duty to put on the Paper a month ago a Motion relating to a special point in connection with naval matters, but he had not since had an opportunity of bringing that Motion before the House. He felt very clearly, however, that the present occasion was not one on which it would be convenient for the House to deal with the subject to which the Motion related, and therefore he would not further refer to it on that occasion, although it was a matter of some importance, and one which did involve a matter of charge against the administration of the Department. With regard to the programme which the Committee was discussing, he should like to say, once for all, that it appeared to him to be an honest and straightforward programme, and to bear evident marks of being a naval officers' programme. It sketched out a scheme of additions to the Navy which would be of enormous service if they were carried through. It appeared to him to be a naval officers' programme, not merely or chiefly on account of the ships which it was proposed to add to the effective list, but on account of many of the smaller details, which appeared to him to be almost as important as the main additions to the Navy. He was aware that the power of naval officers to regulate these matters ended at a very definite point, and he was anxious that their powers should not in future be allowed to end at that point. There appeared to be an impression in the House—and there was certainly an impression outside the House—that the present programme was something in the nature of an abnormal effort, and that something very extra special was being done this year for which all who were interested in the Navy ought to feel very grateful. That effect, no doubt, had been produced very largely by the fact that the Naval Defence Act contributions had now come to an end. He believed it would be a surprise to many to be told that the whole amount to be devoted to construction during the present year was not only not more than had been devoted to that purpose in recent years, but was £1,000,000 less than the amounts spent in construction in 1890–1 and 1891–2; that it was only £200,000 more than the average of the five years ending in 1892–3, and that the average expenditure of the last two years, since the present Government had been in Office, was less than the average of the previous five years. This, therefore, was no abnormal effort. The Government were merely asking the House to continue the ordinary process of additions to the Navy, and it was only because the sum which had been contributed out of the Consolidated Fund under the Naval Defence Act was now brought into the ordinary Estimates that there was an apparent excess in the matter of construction over the expenditure of recent years. He was prepared to hear that the public agitation which had preceded this new programme had nothing whatever to do with its initiation. It had been his fate to hear the same argument put forward on three separate occasions when large expenditure on the Navy had been proposed, and it was, therefore, entitled to all the respect due to an old friend. Everybody, however, knew very well that the expenditure on two previous occasions would not have been incurred if it had not been that the activity of the responsible officials at the Admiralty was stimulated by the action of independent persons outside. That was a matter of great regret. Another point with regard to this programme was that, although nominally for a single year, 1894–5, it was really a programme for three years. They were told there were to be nine battleships, seven to be laid down this year, and two being constructed. It was an entire mistake to suppose that those nine battleships represented the programme for this year, for it represented in fact last year, this year, and the greater part of next year. Two of the vessels, whose names had already been introduced to the notice of the House, had been delayed in construction, and it might safely be said that the only reason why those vessels had not already reached one-third of their total advancement was that they had been postponed from causes which need not be gone into, though deeply to be regretted. Those two ships, the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent*, were no more part of this year's programme than they were of that for 1880. With regard to two other battleships—Nos. 4 and 5—a nominal amount only was asked, some £25,000 or £30,000, but they would not be commenced within this calendar year. He ventured to doubt very much whether, in view of what had happened during the past 12 months, those two vessels would be laid down during the present financial year. That reduced the number of battleships really to be commenced from nine to five, a matter which ought to be clearly understood when considering this programme. How was this money to be spent ? Last year several millions were voted for construction, but that money was not spent for the purpose for which it was voted. No doubt great progress had been made with the *Magnificent* and the *Majestic* and the cruisers within the last quarter of the financial year, but if that rapid progress could be made now it could equally have been made months ago. He admitted there was some reason for postponing those vessels for some months, but they ought to have been begun long before they were actually commenced. The House ought to be very vigilant, and ought to take every means to secure that money voted was really expended in the most profitable way, and as soon as possible for the objects for which it was intended. It seemed very strange that it should be possible for so large a sum as that voted last year for building first-class cruisers to be diverted to another purpose. The whole sum intended for the *Terrible* was devoted to the construction of torpedo-boat destroyers, though he was glad they had been put in hand, and wished more of them could have been completed. If it was competent to the Admiralty to divert £300,000 from the construction of a large protected cruiser to the building of 20 or 30 torpedo-boat destroyers, it would be equally competent to them to divert the money voted for a battleship to the construction of a cruiser or a coal-hulk. It would have been simpler if the Admiralty had told the House that this alteration had been made. He confessed he had been unable to trace any similar case, and it was wasting the time of the House of Commons to vote £400,000 or £500,000 for a particular purpose, and to find some months afterwards that the whole of that money had been diverted to a totally different object. He would say only a word or two upon the subject of construction. In the first place, he was hardly competent to give any technical information to the House, and, in the second, he did not think the House was a competent body to decide such matters over the heads of the Admiralty. But, fortunately, these matters were not dependent wholly upon technical considerations, but upon considerations which were within the information and knowledge of Members of the House. He felt pretty sanguine there would be a development in one direction in the method of construction. A great change had taken place in our canons of construction, and one hon. Member had alluded to a case where we had followed French types. The fact was, that we had spent millions of money in adopting a system directly at variance with the French, and then time after time had abandoned our own designs to follow them. We discarded breech-loading guns in 1860, when the French adopted them, and after 10 years' postponement we followed their example. Again, when we were constructing low freeboard ships the French were building high freeboard vessels; and they were building long cruisers while we were constructing short ones. Our naval officers had protested strongly against those short vessels, and now at last we were at this moment laying down cruisers longer than any others in the world. He had always warmly supported the view that we were making a mistake in the way we were arming our cruisers, putting only one gun forward and one gun aft, whereas every French cruiser of recent construction had from three to five guns forward and aft. Cruisers were intended for purposes of chase, or avoiding chase, and would generally use their bow and stern guns. In that respect the superiority of the French cruisers would be overwhelming. We had actually built 30 cruisers, costing from £250,000 to £280,000 a-piece, with single fore-and-aft guns, but now only within the last two months orders were sent down for sponsons to be put on to nine cruisers already built, and the same plan was to be followed in the *Eclipse*, *Talbot*, and *Minerva*, and in all the new cruisers to be built. In fact, we were now following the French pattern for those vessels, but the others were still deprived of that gun power. They might hope to see a change in another respect. Every Englishman knew how great a loss our Navy sustained by a shot from an armed top, causing the death of Lord Nelson. The French vessels engaged on the Menam some time ago had, according to photographs which he possessed, armoured tops. Our cruisers, with their armament open on deck, would be exposed to a fire from the French tops in a most dangerous degree. At the bombardment of Bangkok a correspondent had informed him that the French made great use of their armed tops, and that in his opinion, as a competent sailor and gunner, the French gunboats could absolutely have put our gunboat the *Swift* out of action by sweeping her decks from the tops. He hoped that that would cease to be a possibility, and that we should put armoured tops in our vessels. A large sum had been spent on the *Monarch*, a ship which he knew to be one of the most seaworthy ships in the Navy. Up to the present she had cost £500,000 sterling, and it seemed a misfortune that we should allow to remain upon that ship four guns which were really of the worst type in the whole Navy. They were wrongly described in the Estimates as 35-ton guns, and were really only 25-ton guns firing obsolete projectiles, and had been so long in the Service that they had practically become smooth-bores, and he hoped the Secretary to the Admiralty would be able to state that something had been done to render them more effective, for if that defect were remedied the vessel might be placed, if not in the first line, at any rate high up in the second. Referring to cruisers, he argued that from our British point of view to be effective they must work in couples. The present neutrality laws were so strict that it would be absolutely impossible for a single cruiser of ours to follow an enemy's cruiser when she took refuge in a neutral port. What happened in the Bahamas during the American War? An enemy's cruiser would run in, and we must remain in the offing or follow her in, bound to give 24 hours' law before we followed her out. A cruiser with 24 hours' law allowed her would certainly escape. Our vessel would have to lie off the harbour with her bottom becoming foul and her fires banked. What was required was to have two cruisers, one to lie inside and the other outside alternately, sealing the mouth of the port, which it would be absolutely impossible to do with a single cruiser. We should not forget the *Rossia*, the *Rurik*, and other vessels of that type, and make some attempt to cope with them. He urged upon the Admiralty the advisability of our availing ourselves of the material at hand for manning the first-class torpedo-boats. It could not be too often insisted upon that to take crews out of our men-of-war for that purpose was a gross error, never committed by the French. Yachtsmen and men around our coast accustomed to handle small vessels should be employed, and in that way an effective force of torpedo-boats might be provided for our coasts, which would add enormously to the security of this country. Something had been said about the *personnel* of the Navy. It was not his business to take up the cudgels on behalf of the officers and men of the Royal Navy; but he had received so much courtesy and help from officers and men that he thought they would not resent his saying a word on their behalf. His acquaintance with the men on the lower decks was perhaps as extensive as that of his hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough, but he seemed rather to have over-stated the feeling of resentment existing in the Royal Navy as to the arrangements made for their comfort; but there certainly were causes of complaint which might be removed, though to say that there was any reason for such discontent as was stated was, he believed, a libel. Something had been said about the desirability of increasing the number of commissioned officers from the ranks of the warrant officers. The latter were, no doubt, an enormous element of strength in the Navy, but it would be doing them an ill-service to carry out the suggestion of the hon. Member for Middlesbrough. But they must not altogether forget the commissioned officers. Those officers were certainly not overpaid, as far as money went. As he had once before told the House, for a considerable period of their service those officers received 2s. 8d. a day less than was paid to the compositors who set up in type the Orders of that House; but they were further paid partly in prospects and partly in social advantages. That might be a wrong system, though he did not think so; but things must be looked at as they were, and if they were going to break up the present system they must be prepared with a better one. The general feeling in the Navy was against breaking up the social conditions and organisation of the ward-room. And the warrant officers themselves had never asked for that. The demand of the warrant officers was not a demand for more public money. The demand was for greater social distinction and a better position in the Service. They did not ask to be placed in the ward-rooms of our men-of-war as commissioned officers, but they asked for a status to be given them as officers in the Royal Navy, and to ask for more for them would be to do them a disservice. Theirs was a just, honourable, and reasonable demand, and he trusted the warrant officers of the Navy would find some better advocate than the hon. Member for Middlesbrough. Naval officers had few of the social advantages of officers in the Army. For many months in the year they had no society except that on board, and the House should be careful that justice was done to their position. Other matters would come up and would have to be dealt with on later Votes. But one of the most important matters in the whole Navy Estimates was not dealt with here—the dock and mole at Gibraltar. He was at a loss to understand why, unless for purposes of public advertisement and to obtain a favourable notice in the newspapers, this miserable Vote of £1,000 was brought into the Estimates at all. But £1,000 would not pay for the uniforms worn out by the men going to look at the works. The House ought not to be misled by such palpably fictitious statements. Until the Gibraltar question was fairly faced the supremacy of this country at sea was in deadly peril. He trusted that they would see this Programme carried out, and that the neglect which certainly occurred in 1893 would not take place in 1894.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I think everyone who is familiar with this question must have listened with interest to the most able speech which the hon. Gentleman has delivered, and I regret that my hon. Friend has deferred to a later stage in our proceedings and upon other Votes the bringing forward of questions which are more or less germane to the great Debate in which the Committee is now engaged. I do not rise to contribute any personal views of my own to this Debate. But it is perhaps one of the most important in which we shall be engaged during this Session, and I do not think I should remain silent. But what I rose for was to say that I think the interests of business would be served if the right hon. Gentleman would try at once to deal with the points which, up to this moment, have been brought forward. We have listened to four speeches delivered by four gentlemen representing various interests. There was the speech of my right hon. Friend, who spoke with great ability and from knowledge he derived partly from his long connection with the Admiralty and partly from his knowledge of the business of which he is so distinguished a representative. He was followed by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. J. H. Wilson), who spoke as the representative of the Seamen's Union. That speech was followed by one from a naval officer on this side of the House, and then came the speech of my hon. Friend who has just resumed his seat. Every one of those speeches was crammed with detail, was marked with great ability and knowledge, and required a detailed answer from the Minister in charge of these Estimates. If the right hon. Gentleman defers his reply to a later period in the evening it will be impossible in the scope of one speech to do those speeches justice. Recollect what we have still to go through in this Debate. We are asked to discuss a programme which, however modestly it may appear in the Estimates, will cost between £20,000,000 and £30,000,000 to have carried to completion, as I hope it will be carried to a completion. In dealing with this we have not only to deal with the actual ships that have to be built, their type, their class, their number, and their cost, but also with the method in which the Government propose to meet the financial liabilities which this great programme will necessarily involve, and these are questions which, if I may say so without disrespect to the present occupants of the Front Bench, cannot be discussed in the absence of a Cabinet Minister and in the absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am not asking for his presence now, as I am aware that he cannot be here, but the point I respecfully lay before the right hon. Gentleman is this: It may be that he can completely and adequately deal with all the questions that have been raised, but before this Debate concludes still larger issues will have to be brought on, and as the First Lord of the Admiralty is not in this House it is impossible that they can be discussed in the absence of those who are responsible for the Cabinet policy. I think the time has come when we may receive a reply from that Bench to the speeches that have already been made. There is some advantage in carrying on these discussions with the Speaker out of the Chair, and one of the great advantages of that system is that the Minister in charge can speak as often as he pleases; therefore, instead of covering sheets of paper with notes, I would suggest that before we proceed further, and plunge more deeply into the innermost recesses of this great controversy, that the right hon. Gentleman would deal with the Debate so far as it has gone.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I understood that some hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House desired to offer observations to the Committee, and I thought it only respectful to them that I should not intervene before them in the Debate; but, after the courteous appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, I at once rise to reply to the speeches that have been made. I thought it my duty to take notes of the observations of those gentlemen who have taken part in the Debate, and I rely upon those for the purpose of giving an adequate reply. As the right hon. Gentleman has stated, the speeches made have been in very large detail, dealing with many figures, and if I fail to answer every point raised I hope hon. Gentlemen will not suppose it is out of any disrespect to them. I will first of all address myself to a point connected with the manning of the Navy, which was raised by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for the Ormskirk Division of Liverpool (Mr. Forwood). He took some notice of a speech made by the Home Secretary, which I did not have the advantage of reading, but I would remind him that in anything I said in the speech I made on the 20th of March, when I introduced these Estimates to the notice of the House, I was careful to say that I did not wish to make any controversial remarks about the late Government on this subject. I at once admit it is perfectly true that the late Government added 12,700 to the numbers of the Navy. That was at the rate of 2,100 a year. But we have proposed to add in two years 9,300, which is 4,150 a year, or rather more than double the average of the late Government. I do not wish to carry it further than this—that a heavy burden has been laid upon us; and when hon. Gentlemen seek to minimise what is being done by the Government they should remember that we are fully giving effect to what is necessary in respect to manning the Navy. I pass from that to the remarks made by the right hon. Gentleman as to giving the men and officers the fullest opportunity of learning their duties. He alluded, in connection with this, to the incident in respect to the *Resolution.* As the late Government were responsible for the design, the right hon. Gentleman is anxious to establish there is nothing wrong with that ship. While I concur in that view, I am a little doubtful whether it was quite just, or whether it was in the best taste, to attempt, in saving the reputation of the ship, to cast a slur on the reputation of our officers generally, and of the very gallant and able officer who commanded in particular. The right hon. Gentleman cannot have been aware that when the *Resolution* went to sea Captain Hall was, unfortunately, suffering from illness.

Mr. FORWOOD: I was not aware of that.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I pass from that—I lay no stress upon that—and I come to his remark in which he said that officers, before they are sent to sea in a big ship, should have some experience of the management of these ships. Perhaps he is also unaware that Captain Hall commanded with great distinction a very large cruiser, the *Blenheim*, during the manœuvres. My right hon. Friend has a panacea for enabling our officers to more adequately discharge their duties; it is a panacea that comes from Liverpool, and it is that they should be sent as passengers in one of the Atlantic liners to and fro across the Atlantic. That is his panacea.

Mr. FORWOOD: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to say he has misinterpreted and is misrepresenting what I said. What I said was, that if there is not afforded an opportunity of gaining experience of large vessels in heavy weather at sea, and if the Admiralty could not afford the coal to keep them so employed, it would be far better that our junior officers should gain experience in Atlantic liners, not as passengers, but as mercantile officers.

*Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The right hon. Gentleman on this and other subjects thinks there is nothing like leather; that there is nothing like the ships that sail from Liverpool, and nothing like the troopships that could be hired there. I think there can be no doubt that our officers can obtain all the experience that is necessary in the management of ships in rough weather on board Her Majesty's ships, and the Admiralty is not prepared to adopt the suggestion of my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend criticised the amount of sea training given to officers and men, and alluded to some facts he obtained by means of questions he put on the Paper with respect to the amount of time Her Majesty's ships spent at sea, and the speed at which they run. We are not prepared to admit that you can thus judge of the efficiency that officers and men attain—in the Mediterranean, for example—when at sea. During some period of that time they are engaged in steam tactics. Sometimes they are running at a high rate of speed, but for the most part they are at a low speed. But the officers would certainly not be doing their duty if they were continually to run Her Majesty's ships at a high rate of speed under forced draught. I would venture to remind my right hon. Friend that on these various subjects he has criticised a state of things which existed during the six years he was a responsible Member of the Board of Admiralty, and I do not know that he took any steps, or that the Board approved of any steps which he may have suggested, for carrying out alterations. With regard to what the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. J. H. Wilson) said upon the clothing and victualling of the seamen, I would rather reserve any remarks I have to make for the Vote for the victualling of the Navy, with this exception, that my hon. Friend omitted to notice the fact that a seaman receives a free kit when he joins, or an allowance in lieu of it, and an allowance for uniform when promoted to be a petty or a warrant officer. I cannot at all admit what my hon. Friend says respecting the victualling of the Navy. My hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Arnold-Forster) is much nearer the truth when he says the men are well treated both in the victualling and the clothing, and that they are content. Now I pass on to the subject which I think is more immediately before the House today, and that is the various subjects connected with shipbuilding. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Ormskirk Division of Liverpool (Mr. Forwood) made a charge against the Government that they are concealing the cost of the new vessels, and that they are laying the burden on future years without telling the House what that burden would be. Well, there are figures it is not desirable fully to state in the Estimates, while contracts are yet to be obtained in the open market. And in taking that line we are following a precedent set by the late Government. I have the Estimates for 1892-3 before me, for which the late Government were responsible. You will find there that three new ships were announced, and exactly the same course was taken, and no doubt on equally good grounds. The details were not complete, and exactly the same course was taken then as now.

MR. FORWOOD: It was proposed to expend £60,000 on the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent.*

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: In regard to the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent*, they are being built in dockyards. We are inviting contracts for similar ships, and at the moment when we were inviting contracts it was not desirable to say what was the estimated probable cost in the dockyards of exactly similar ships. There was no desire or intention to conceal anything from Parliament; but we followed the precedent of former years, and had excellent reasons. So much for concealment. I stated, approximately, the cost of the *Powerful* and *Terrible* last year at about £700,000; I submitted the amount to the House, and that is on record. Then my right hon. Friend says the Government propose only taking £2,300,000 for new ships and those now building. He knows perfectly well that the early stages of ships are not so costly as a later stage. The Comptroller is satisfied that the amounts in the Estimates are what we are likely to spend on those ships, pushing them forward as rapidly as possible. The House cannot expect us to do more than that. Coming to another criticism of the right hon. Gentleman, he says that the sum provided in the Estimates of 1892-3 for another battleship was not spent. That is going back again to the time when the present Government took Office. What was the amount in the Estimates in that year? It was £10,000, and the late Board of Admiralty left on record a determination arrived at in the month of April—that is, four months before we came into Office—that they would reduce that amount to £5,000, so that the amount which he complains that we did not expend was only £5,000. I may also mention that when we came into Office no steps had been taken towards the building of that ship. The right hon. Gentleman then went into a number of statistical calculations, and I confess I did not follow him then, and do not intend to follow him now. Finally, he asked two questions: First, was the programme based on the advice of our naval advisers? I think the House has already been informed on that subject, and I answer emphatically "Yes, it is based on the counsel of our naval advisers." Secondly, is it the intention of the Admiralty to make the Fleet equal to meeting two Foreign Powers? and I answer that that is our intention. I now come to the points raised by the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Arnold-Forster). I was glad to hear in that interesting and able speech that he spoke of our programme as an honest and straightforward one. I can assure him—I hope he will not mistrust my assurance—it is the full intention of Lord Spencer to carry that programme through if he has the opportunity. He asked what was the reason of the changes made in the expenditure of last year, and he seemed rather to suggest they were changes made by Lord Spencer or the civil members of the Board, and not by the Board as a whole. I think my hon. Friend will see that is a reflection on our naval advisers that we made a change which they did not approve. The changes that were made were most strongly urged on the Board by their naval advisers, and were accepted by Lord Spencer and his civil colleagues, because we were convinced of the extreme importance of these changes. I would deal with one other point of my hon. Friend, and that is, he says a mere nominal amount appears in the Estimates for two of our battleships. The sum is £57,000—close upon £60,000—and I cannot regard that as a nominal sum. The reason for not taking more is because more cannot be spent upon those two ships in the dockyards, as the dockyards will be fully occupied with other work till the year is far advanced; it is as much as can be spent on them considering the other work of the dockyards. I now come to the many suggestions made, that the money last year was not spent as it had been voted. In regard to the expenditure of last year, I think there has been a good deal of exaggeration, and I would like to remind the House that my hon. Friend himself admitted, in respect to the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent*, that two or three months' delay was perfectly justified. When the loss of the *Victoria* took place the Board of Admiralty would not send out the designs of the new ships until they satisfied themselves that the evidence in respect to that loss threw no new light on the design, which would make it wise to alter the design of those two ships before the actual construction was begun. At the earliest moment, as soon as they were satisfied about the designs, they sent them in to the dockyards. That was the sole reason for the postponement of the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent*. I have heard a description of a search the hon. Member made at the dockyard in order to discover the keel of the *Majestic*. If he had gone to the Admiral Superintendent he would have been taken to the place where, under cover, with great advantage to the workmen and with great advantage to the work, for weeks the operations for building the *Majestic* were going on. The result of adopting that system is that ships will now be built more rapidly than was the case under the old method, and the Dockyard Authorities have informed me that they may commence to lay keels even later than they did in the case of the *Majestic*, so very much greater is the progress thus made with the work. The hon. Member has often said that the *Majestic* is very much behind-hand. Well, in spite of the two or three months' delay which took place through causes not within our control, but owing to the loss of the *Victoria*, out of £74,500 taken in the Estimates for the *Majestic*, we have spent £55,215. The *Majestic*, as I stated the other day, is advancing by leaps and bounds, and she is, we hope, being built more rapidly than any battleship was ever built before. That, I think, answers the point that my hon. Friend has brought forward. Let me state this generally—and I think the House will be pleased to hear it, and it is only just to the Admiralty that it should be stated—that taking labour and materials, which, after all, are the points under control, while contract work is not, so we have spent more in labour and materials on new construction during the past year than we expected we should have been able to spend and slightly more than we took in the Estimates. The Estimate was a very close one, but we were disappointed, as previous Governments have been, in the amount which we thought we could spend on contract work. The contractors do not succeed in earning all that the sanguine expectations of the Admiralty lead them to expect. That has happened year after year. But I am happy to say that our expectations are being more and more realised every year. Each year the performances of the contractors approach the Estimates more nearly than before, and last year they succeeded in approaching them nearer than has been the case in any previous year. I think I may say that the late Government had considerable experience of disappointment by contractors, and they found that their Estimates of what would be spent on the contracting part of the shipbuilding programme were often too sanguine. In 1889-90 they were too sanguine by £349,964; in 1890-91 by £230,443; in 1891-92 by £190,582; in 1892-93 by £146,650; and in 1893-94 by £98,232. These figures relate to contract work on shipbuilding out of Navy Votes. Moreover, under the Special Fund of the Naval Defence Act in 1890-91 there was a short expenditure of £1,016,000 on contract work as compared with the Estimate. I hope we are arriving at a point when we may be able to estimate more closely in these matters. The Admiralty went into the subject with great care, and the result is that we have in the present Estimates attempted, I hope with success, to estimate much more closely. We may again have made a mistake, but we have done our best. While on this subject, will the House allow me to state the actual figures as to the expenditure on labour and materials in the Estimates, and the actual results, because I think them very satisfactory? The estimated expenditure on the Naval Defence Act dockyard-built ships, including the completion of contract-built ships, was £997,600; the actual expenditure has been £1,003,357, so that we have slightly exceeded the Estimate in labour and materials. On the further programme our expenditure was estimated at £430,430; we have actually spent £447,511. I do lay some stress upon that, because I have repeatedly given assurances to the House, which are now fully borne out, that we should be able to spend the money we had taken for new construction. Within the last few days a good deal of stress has been laid upon the diversion of expenditure from torpedo-boat destroyers, and I should like to state to the House what has been the actual amount of money thus diverted. In the Estimates we took for 20 torpedo-boat destroyers an expenditure of £237,786, and the actual amount expended in the year on 42 of these vessels has been £27,359, so that when we hear this talk of a diversion it is only a diversion of £27,359.

Lord G. HAMILTON: You have spent £27,000, and you have a liability of £800,000.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The point I am dealing with at the present moment is that of the diversion of money. The amount of diversion has been £27,000, so that not much can be made of that. I will go at once to the further point, and that is whether we ought to have diverted the money at all, and whether we were right in ordering 42 torpedo-boat destroyers. I have already informed the House that the step was taken on the very urgent counsel of our naval advisers, and was unanimously approved by the Board after mature consideration. I should also like to remind the House that it was all done above-board, and the approval of the Treasury was obtained to this change of policy. And what is the policy and practice of Parliament with respect to Estimates? It is this: that Governments ought to adhere to the Estimates as far as possible and not depart from them without the authority of the Treasury. The Treasury exists for the purpose, when the necessity arises, of being consulted by a Government or a Department, and (if it sees fit) of sanctioning a departure from the Estimate. We have obtained Treasury sanction to the step we took. But what is of far greater importance to the House than any question of that sort is the question of policy. I do not think it is desirable to emphasise too strongly the necessity which has arisen, in consequence of action abroad, of supplying one deficiency in our naval strength—namely, our means of meeting torpedo attack. But that was borne in more and more strongly upon the present Board of Admiralty as month after month they continued in Office, and they deliberately came to the conclusion that it was their duty to do a great deal more in the way of provision of torpedo-boat destroyers than they originally put in the Estimates, and in doing so they have had the approval of the House as a whole and of the country. The noble Lord opposite in his speech in the last Debate spoke of the torpedo-boat destroyers as if they possessed no powers of offence. But his view is dissented from by the Naval Members of the Board, who are of opinion that these vessels will prove of great offensive value. Their armament has been designed with that object. And the experimental trials that have lately taken place have shown that these vessels possess considerable offensive powers. I could say a great deal more on this subject, but I do not wish in any way to introduce what may be regarded as controversial matter. I will, therefore, only say that this was an element in our naval security and power which we considered had been somewhat overlooked, and that without additional torpedo-boat destroyers we had not the requisite strength to cope with Foreign Powers.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (interposing) said, that the point made was not that the money had been ill-spent, but that it was spent for a different purpose from that for which it was asked and voted, and without any notice being given to the House even in the form of a Supplementary Estimate.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The change was made after the Estimates had passed through the House. The announcement was made formally in Parliament—first in a Paper presented in August—that we should spend more money than we originally intended in pushing on the 14 torpedo-boat destroyers. Subsequently it was found that that would not be possible, and it was determined, as a matter of policy of the gravest character, to increase the number of these torpedo-boats to 42, and we informed Parliament of the fact in December, and also obtained Treasury sanction. As to the liability, the whole remaining expenditure on these torpedo-boat destroyers is included in this year's Estimates, and no doubt it is a large liability; but we deliberately say to this House that this is the most essential and most pressing part of naval expenditure we have to bring before Parliament, and we ask the House to ratify what we have done by approving of this liability and placing it on the year 1894-5. On the subject of designs of ships, the hon. Member for West Belfast Division has made some criticisms. These criticisms affect the naval defence ships more than ours. It is perfectly true that sponsons for four guns are being added to eight vessels, and the hon. Member will be glad to hear that we are introducing armoured tops in the masts of some of the new cruisers. Then the hon. Member for Holderness has suggested that the Admiralty should seek outside advice in the shape of Committees, and he said that had they done so mistakes might have been obviated in regard to a low freeboard and in constructing ships of the *Admiral* class. The hon. and gallant Gentleman will be surprised to learn that a special Committee, summoned about 25 years ago, and including many representative men, actually considered and approved the vessels of the *Devastation* class with moderate freeboard.

Commander BETHELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman be surprised to learn that that was in reference to one ship—the *Captain?*

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: That is the recommendation made by one of these Committees, and my hon. and gallant Friend is perhaps a little indiscreet in reminding the House of that case of the *Captain.*

Commander BETHELL said, he believed that, as a matter of fact, no Committee reported in that case, though he admitted that pressure was brought to bear on the Admiralty from outside.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Yes, she was pressed upon the Admiralty. The mistakes made in the *Captain* were not Admiralty mistakes. She was spoken of as "a House of Commons ship." She certainly was not an Admiralty ship. My hon. and gallant Friend is evidently not enamoured of the *Admiral* class. Is he aware that Lord Dufferin's Committee on Designs in 1871 recommended the adoption of unarmoured ends and central armoured citadels?

*Sir E. J. REED (Cardiff): Does the right hon. Gentleman say that the unarmoured end, as carried out in the *Admiral* class, was ever recommended to that extent by Lord Dufferin's Committee?

*Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: All I say is that Lord Dufferin's Committee recommended the adoption of the unarmoured ends and the central armoured citadel. I was very glad the hon. Member for Holderness approved of the laying down of the *Talbots*, and I should like to say a few words in answer to what the noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Hamilton) said on this point. The noble Lord, in the last Naval Debate, argued that it would have been wiser to build four first-class cruisers, capable of taking part in any great naval engagement, rather than the six *Talbots.* He added: "What we want are big vessels." In Lord Spencer's Statement (page 6) it is explained that the New Programme embraces various types of cruisers, all to be completed within five years. The Admiralty must necessarily decide the order in which these types shall be laid down. In the exercise of this discretion they have thought it best to commence with six *Talbots.* Although these vessels are styled "second-class cruisers," they compare favourably with the most recent first-class cruisers (*Edgar* class) in regard to speed, coal capacity, and sea-keeping power. In armament and protection they are not equal to the recent first-class cruisers, but they are superior to second-class cruisers of earlier construction. The designs have been largely influenced by the provisions necessary for distant service, in the protection of commerce, involving long periods at sea. But the vessels are also suitable for service with fleets as attendant cruisers. They are wood-sheathed and coppered, in order to maintain their speed, without the necessity for frequent docking. They have bunkers equal in capacity to those of first-class cruisers, and will be able to carry 1,100 tons of coal. The length is only 10 feet less than that of the *Edgar* class. The *Talbots* are vessels of 5,600 tons. They are 50 feet longer, though two feet narrower, than the belted cruisers (*Orlando* type), which rank as first-class. They are of the same nominal displacement as the belted cruisers, but faster, and have larger coal storage. They are not so heavily armed, and have protective decks without vertical armour on the sides. I would point out that the noble Lord has scarcely realised what these ships are; and, although they are named second-class, what a useful addition they will be to the Navy. I must say one word about reconstruction. The case of the *Monarch* has been mentioned, and the hon. Member who mentioned it objected to our retaining muzzle-loading guns in some of these old ships like the *Hercules*. But the decision in this matter is not peculiar to the present Board. The hon. Member does not fully take into account, first, that when these ships are reconstructed they receive an adequate quick-firing armament; and, second, that experience has shown that the expense of the structural alterations that are necessary to alter the broadside armoured ships and adapt them for carrying breechloading guns is so very great that the late Government would not face it, and the present Board of Admiralty will not face it. These will be very useful ships with that quick-firing armament in the second line of reserve in case of war. One of these ships was altered by the late Government, and the experience they gained was that it was not worth while to incur that expenditure of money which would, in the opinion of the Board of Admiralty, be better spent on new ships than in reconstructing old ones to that extent. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Ormskirk Division raised certain questions on the Expense Accounts which can best be dealt with by the Public Accounts Committee, and therefore I shall resist the temptation of replying to them. The right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that the Admiralty would have to surrender a considerable part of the money they are now taking in respect of contract work. I hold a contrary opinion; I think we have estimated very closely. But I would put this question to the Opposition, Are the Government taking too much money or are they taking too little? Hon. Gentlemen must ride on the one horse or on the other; it is inconsistent to seek to ride on both. On the subject of troopships, I have to say that communications are proceeding between the Indian Government and the Admiralty. For the present we must use hired troopships, with the exception of the *Malabar*. What will be done in the future will depend on the negotiations now going on between the Indian and the Home Governments. The case the right hon. Gentleman gives was entirely an exceptional case, the *Bothnia* being taken at a time when the rates were exceedingly low; so that no comparison of the cost of hiring as compared with Government troopships can be founded upon it. I think I have now answered all the points that have been raised, and I apologise to the Committee for having detained them so long.

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, the Debate very properly had not been confined to material, but the subject of *personnel* had been alluded to by almost all who had taken part in the discussion. It was being realised at last that it was a waste of money and time to build ships without an adequate supply of men to man them. He thought it was admitted on all sides that in the past inadequate steps had been taken to meet the demands bearing on the Fleet. When it was considered that in nine years they had had three programmes, each larger than its predecessor, it naturally followed that the requirements of the *personnel* were large indeed. He found in the Navy Estimates of 1889-90 there was a Return showing what would be the total number of ships which would be added to the Navy between April 1, 1889, and April 1, 1894. That included ships building and those provided under the Naval Defence Act, and the total was 113 ships. Further, they had to add the additional ships since built or projected, and also take within their purview those that were to be included in what he might term the Spencer Programme. The estimate most freely relied on was that the Navy in the matter of manning was about 10,000 men short, and some who had a right to speak with considerable authority went so far as to say that 15,000 would be nearer the figure; but he could not help feeling that, although much was being done to catch up these arrears, so far they had fallen very short of the requirements indeed. He ventured to say that the total which was put down in the present estimate—6,500 men—were altogether inadequate for the requirements of the Service. The first question that arose was how to overcome these difficulties—to find men to man the fleet not only to meet present deficiencies, but to meet future requirements. He ventured to suggest that if more inducements were offered they would not only succeed in getting more men to join the Navy, but, what was more important, would longer retain the services of those already in it. They found, from the Return published in June, 1890, that the wastage during the first 10 years of a man's service was very large. The percentage of seamen and stokers lost before completing their first term was seamen 46 per cent. and stokers 39 per cent. That was to say, that only 54 out of 100 seamen completed their first term and only 61 stokers. Steps might be most advantageously taken to induce men to complete their full term—that was, 20 years' man's time—instead of leaving at the age of 38. He did not think there was a single walk in life where men abandoned their profession at such an age as 38. They all believed that a man at that period of life was positively in his prime, and it did seem curious that the Admiralty did not take steps to recognise this and offer some inducement for the men to serve on. He would be told, of course, that some men re-engaged, and that those who did not re-engage came into the Seamen's Pension Reserve. That, he admitted, would be a very fair rejoinder were they not face to face with the fact that the requirements for the existing Fleet were not sufficiently met. How could they take satisfaction in the fact that these men fell back into the Reserve when they considered that the Fleet in commission was altogether short of men? There should be some method whereby these men who now retired at 38 years of age might be induced to serve on. If they re-engaged for a fifth term, then they had their pension assured to them. He would offer the suggestion that the Admiralty should allow the men to draw the value of the pension they had earned by a full term of service, while they made it a condition in return that they should re-engage not for five years, but for 12 years. Then they would get the most splendid men, the very pick of the Fleet, serving until they were 50 years of age. It would be impossible for anyone to argue that a man of 50 would not be a desirable acquisition. The commissioned officers, the warrant officers, and the engineers served to that age, and he failed to see why these men who were so serviceable should not continue to the same age. It might be suggested that were the men to draw their pension, which was not very great, ranging only from £28 to £38 a year, they would have an amount of independence which would be detrimental to the Service. But he would point out that when these men left the Navy they had to seek other employment in private life; and speaking with some experience of them, he could say that in civil employment they pursued their work with as much assiduity as they did when under the Service of the Crown. Passing to the general inducements to get men to join the Service, it was becoming well understood by the public outside that the terms and conditions of service were not such as to attract young men to join the Navy. One of the great grievances, and one which had been pushed forward for 25 years in the House, was in respect to warrant officers, which was the highest rank the lower deck could aspire to. When they considered what were the qualifications these men must possess before they reached that rank, that they must have faultless characters and pass stringent qualifying examinations, it would be admitted some attention should be given to their desire for a larger avenue of promotion to be opened for them. Qualified men reached this rank generally at about 27 years of age, and then they were face to face with a blank wall till 50 years of age, when they became Chiefs. Certainly they received some increase of pay at intervals, but it was in diminishing ratio to the time served, which was altogether out of the usual custom of the generality of employments of which one had experience. The request the men made was very simple indeed, that they should be able to secure the rank of Chief after 10 years' seniority as warrant officer, and that after 20 years in that position there should be some new rank obtainable to stimulate their interest in the Service. It had been suggested the position should be called "fleet rank," seeing that that term was in acceptance in the Navy, and he thought that it was a very admirable suggestion. The men naturally pointed out with a great amount of justification that the Army was altogether different in this respect. There was there not only the open gate for continuous promotion, but a way to obtain commissioned rank itself. The warrant officers in the Navy, however, were not asking for that. He thought the Admiralty, after the strong expression of opinion they had heard from both sides of the House, would have little excuse for putting these deserving men off any longer. The late First Lord of the Admiralty gave very favourable consideration to their desire in 1892. He (Mr. Kearley) was not accustomed to sing the praises of his political opponents as a rule, but he did think it was only right to say it was his firm belief, and the belief of many others, that had the noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) continued at the head of the Admiralty this question would have been solved long ere now. The expense of this additional rank had been mentioned. The total expense which would occur to bring about the promotion advocated would not exceed £3,000. There was no expectation on the part of the men that after 10 years' service they should all be promoted to be Chiefs, but only that the best of their men, those who had passed such examination as the Admiralty liked to set forth, should be eligible to secure the rank of Chief. They also desired to see not less than 25 of their number advanced to Fleet rank. For the sake of £3,000 it seemed altogether a pity that this inducement and stimulus should be withheld any longer. Then there was the case of the engine-room artificers. Here, too, there was a lack of prospect which prevented many men joining who would otherwise do so. They went into the Navy with all their skill, having qualified by serving an apprenticeship to their trade, while the executive petty officers of the Navy who joined as boys, and were trained at the country's expense, had access to higher rank than that open to the engine-room artificers. The rank of chief petty officer was altogether inferior to the rank they ought to hold. While the pay of the executive petty officer averaged 2s. 9d. a day, the engine-room artificer averaged 6s. 1d. Thus on the pay basis alone it was clear that the rating should be a higher one. Now, in conclusion, he would like to say one word with regard to the stokers. These men, it was generally admitted, were the worst treated in the whole Navy. They were badly paid, they had very onerous duties to perform, and yet there did not seem to be on the part of the Admiralty any intention or wish to encourage the men. By denying to them the re-engagement money it was clear they did not wish them to serve on for pension. The trained stoker was just as requisite for the Navy as the trained engineer. It was very frequently demonstrated who were the trained men, especially in hot climates, for it was no infrequent occurrence for the young hands to be hoisted out of the stokeholes in a collapsed condition, whilst the older and more matured men were not so affected. Last year he called attention to the way the marines were not only underpaid but underfed. The men were given to suppose on joining that they would receive a free kit and rations free. But they soon found it was not so. The clothing served out to them was inadequate, and they were obliged to supplement their daily allowance of food out of their pay, which was very small. He hoped the Admiralty would be willing to recognise it would be to the advantage of the Service generally if they offered more inducements to the men to join and remain. The suggestion he had heard that there should be a Committee of Inquiry to consider such matters was a good one, and he felt sure the Admiralty themselves must begin to recognise that some investigation should be made into the subject.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): The Debate has ranged over a wide subject, and I do not propose to follow hon. Gentlemen who have spoken at all closely. I propose to deal with the general policy of Her Majesty's Government since they have come into Office, and especially during the past year. Better late than never is the best that can be said for their new naval proposals. Exactly 19 months after they took Office Her Majesty's Ministers began to awake to a sense of their responsibility for the naval supremacy of England, which means the safeguarding of our maritime commerce, of our splendid Merchant Navy, of our Imperial connections and greatness, and of our food supplies. In a word, Ministers who took Office in August, 1892, did not realise till March, 1894, that our national existence and Imperial strength depend upon the maintenance of British naval supremacy. The then discovery came late, and their repentance was tardy; for their sins as regards the Navy had not been merely passive or those of omission; they had also sinned actively and deliberately. When their predecessors fell from Office they left the plans and orders for three battleships, the *Renown*, *Majestic*, and *Magnificent*, which were to have been begun—the first immediately, the other two within two months. The present Government delayed the commencement of the *Renown* for eight months, and of the *Majestic* and *Magnificent* for 17 and 18 months respectively. Moreover, they allowed the amount spent on the new construction of warships to fall heavily below its normal amount for recent years. Thus their expenditure on new construction for the financial year 1893–4 was £1,475,000 less than that spent during the year 1892–3, for the Estimates of which Lord Salisbury's Government was responsible. The present Board of Admiralty—and Her Majesty's Government as a whole, perhaps even more than the Board of Admiralty—were guilty of this neglect and laches at a time when they were aware that other countries, particularly those who are notoriously our political and naval rivals if not our foes, were making immense efforts to increase their naval strength, and especially their strength in battleships. It was clear that those great Naval Powers, notably France and Russia, were, if not already superior to England in battleships, fast completing new ships, in such numbers and at such speed, that within two or three years those two Powers would be considerably stronger in battleships than Great Britain. Notwithstanding this knowledge, and the constant remonstrances, entreaties, and protests against delay, and notwithstanding the encouragement to do their duty given to Her Majesty's Ministers by the Opposition, it is a fact which would be incredible were it not so well known to be undeniable, that from August, 1892, down to January, 1894, not a single new battleship, excepting the *Renown*, was laid down by the present Government. France was in 1893 rapidly completing five first-class and two second-class battleships. Russia was completing four first-class and one second-class battleships—a total of 12 new French and Russian battleships. Yet but one single British battleship was laid down in those precious 17 months; and up to this moment only three British battleships have been commenced in the 20 months that have passed since August, 1892. In 1893 the tonnage of battleships launched in France was 29,929 tons, in Russia 12,490 tons, in the United States 30,600 tons, in Great Britain *nil*. That is to say, while our three greatest rivals on the sea launched in 1893 over 60,000 tons, equivalent to six first-class battleships, England, whose strength, nay, whose very existence depends upon her supremacy on the sea, did not launch a single battleship. I have said nothing of the four new first-class battleships which France is laying down this year (1894), nor of the one new first-class and two second-class battleships which Russia is laying down in 1894. These make a grand total of 19 new French and Russian battleships which will be, by the close of 1894, on the stocks, as against three British battleships now building and the seven promised under the new naval proposals. That is, even after these proposals have been carried into effect, at the end of this year France and Russia will be building 19 ironclad battleships, most of which will be finished by July, 1896, as against our 10 battleships, only one of which can be finished before December, 1896. The deliberate and wanton waste of those 20 months of time may, if we find ourselves engaged in a great naval war in 1895 or 1896—which Heaven forbid!—prove to be big with Fate to this country. I think I am justified in calling attention to the fact that the Government have shuffled and shirked with regard to answers to speeches and questions on the increase of the Navy during the past 20 months in a way which the history of no other Government can parallel. Dilatory pleas of every kind, and, above all, the plea of "the public interest," have been recklessly advanced over and over again, simply in order to cover the silence of Ministers and to keep Parliament and the country in ignorance. Turns and twists of language have been made use of, which, to say the least, were disingenuous, in order to keep back public knowledge. Everything with regard to the Navy was darkened and concealed and more or less misrepresented until at length—synchronously with another notable event, and, perhaps, dependent upon it—on March 15 suddenly the clouds of evasion and concealment were rolled away, and the Admiralty laid these new proposals before the country; programme they cannot be called; because what I understand by a naval programme is a distinct and definite plan for the development of the Navy covering a definite period of years, with a fixed number of ships at a more or less fixed cost, with due provision made, or, at least, sketched out, for its completion. The proposals of the Government fall short in nearly every condition of being a practical programme. Only in one condition is there any definiteness. The House has been told that for the present the Government intend to build seven battleships, six cruisers, and a certain number of torpedo-catchers, but we do not know if that is a programme for one, two, or more years. We do not know the periods in which those ships are to be completed, nor how much money is to be spent upon them within given periods, nor how that money is to be provided. In short, when we come to examine the Estimates, the proposals are more like a public advertisement than a serious scheme—very much of the same kind as the long list of measures contained in the Queen's Speech. The justice of my criticism will be seen when on the examination of the Estimates it appears that out of £8,500,000 which those new warships are to cost only £1,360,000 is taken during the present year. According to the late Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, next year £3,500,000 will be required for carrying on at proper speed the building of those new ships that have been begun this year. The proposals have been put down in a happy-go-lucky sort of way with a vague and loose trust in the future. Not an inkling is given as to how this large sum is to be provided. How much of it would be available if the hon. Member for Northampton happened to be master of the situation? That is not an absurd proposition, because the hon. Gentleman has already off his own bat heavily defeated the Government. Suppose the hon. Member for Northampton, with his anti-naval ideas, were master of the situation, how much money would he spend on ships, and at what rate of progress would the ships be built? Perhaps the Government think the provision of this large sum would be a nice *bonne bouche* to leave to their successors. The same happy-go-lucky policy is shown in the proposals for new works, such as harbours, barracks, and naval establishments. I find that for new works, on which over £4,000,000 are to be spent, only £122,000 is taken in the Estimates for 1894-5. Thus, of all the new naval works the dock at Gibraltar is the most vital and the most needed. It will cost at least £366,000, but only £1,000 is to be spent this coming year on the Gibraltar Dock. The extension of the mole at Gibraltar is also most essential. Yet towards the first extension, which is to cost £85,000, only £20,000 is to be spent this year; and towards the second extension, which is to cost £320,000, only £1,000 is to be spent this year.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: We are building a new mole.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I am very glad to hear that, for it agrees with my view of what ought to be done. But that only makes it easier to spend more than £1,000 this year on the second mole. £950,000 is to be devoted to dredging, but only £85,000 this year. The new basin and docks at Keyham are to cost £2,000,000, but only £1,000 is taken this year. This is reducing the Estimates to an absurdity. For the armament of the new ships £3,800,000 will be wanted, yet only £800,000 is taken in the present year. Russia and France are together spending in 1894 over £6,000,000 on new construction, while our expenditure on new construction for 1894-5 will come to barely £5,000,000. The Government proposals, if they are complete, are most inadequate. I will now proceed to pass some strictures on answers given by the Government to naval questions put in the House. Among the answers and statements in this House to which great exception should be taken, I put first that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in the critical Debate on December 19, 1893, said that—

> "The professional advisers of the Admiralty" (that is, the Naval Lords) hold "that the existing condition of things with regard to the British Navy is satisfactory;"

and further—

> "That the supremacy of the British Navy is at this moment absolute;"

This egregious misstatement the Chancellor of the Exchequer was compelled, by the threatened resignation of the Naval Lords, to whittle down on December 21 to

> "The relative force of the various countries in respect of first-class battleships completed in the present financial year."

Was anything more absurd ever stated in this House? But the Division had been taken on the 19th, and the crisis tided over. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also stated on December 19 that we had 19 first-class battleships ready "in home waters." But he only made up his 19 by counting three ironclads, the *Repulse*, *Revenge*, and *Royal Oak*, which were not ready for sea till three months later, and by rating the *Collingwood* as a first-class battleship—a most doubtful estimate. Moreover, when he spoke, 10 of his list of first-class battleships were in the Mediterranean, over 2,000 miles away. Again, the misstatements with regard to the commencement of the new battleships *Majestic* and *Magnificent* were of the most repeated and extraordinary character. Thus, on the 20th of November, the Secretary to the Admiralty stated that those ships had been begun on August 23 and September 12 respectively.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I stated at the time, with perfect truth, that preparations were begun for the *Majestic* and *Magnificent*, and so they were.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: This is an instance of the turns and twists of language of which I complain. The hon. Gentleman was asked what new battleships had been laid down since August, 1892, and where and what were the dates of their commencement, and the right hon. Gentleman, in his answer, slipped in the words "preparation to build;" but there was not a Member in the House who did not believe from that answer and from other answers on this subject that those ships were begun four or five months before they actually were commenced. When information was asked for with regard to the French and Russian Navies it was refused, with a brusqueness unparalleled in this House, as inconsistent with "the public interest"; and yet, within a few weeks, Ministers did not hesitate to openly give, for their own purposes, the most elaborate details on the very same points. Further, they publicly discussed and made comparisons between the strength of the French and Russian Navies and our own; and they ultimately published statistics making the same comparisons. The "public interest" disappeared so soon as it suited Ministers to discard it. [An hon. Member: Who provoked it?] Does the hon. Member mean to suggest that it was undesirable that the true position of the British Navy as regards those of other Powers should be made known to the British people? Why should facts that are known to every Government and country in Europe be kept back from our own people? Unless he meant that, there is no sense or intelligence in his interruption. I may also refer to the remarkable fact that in the Debate on the 19th of December the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Admiralty withheld all mention of second-class battleships and of coast defence battleships in their comparisons. The Government deliberately threw away 19 months of most valuable time, although they were fully warned of the great progress that foreign countries were making in commencing new ships and in pushing forward those already commenced. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, on December 19, that the French had only 10 first-class battleships ready, whereas they had 11; and that the Russians had only four first-class battleships ready, whereas they had six ready. Moreover, he left out of all account the second-class French and Russian battleships, which number 26 as against our 22; and their coast-defence ironclads, which are very numerous, and which in action near harbours would be formidable opponents. For a Cabinet Minister, speaking on behalf of the Government, on such an issue as our

He was, however, a little surprised to see in the First Lord's Statement an intimation that the new ships were not going to be alike in all respects to the battleships *Majestic* and *Magnificent*.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: They will be almost entirely alike. The designs are the same.

*Sir E. J. REED said, he was relieved to hear that statement. What he objected to strongly was the multiplication of differences in our ships. What was the use of having our ships generally alike in design and size if there were internal minor differences—not differences of principle, but of detail, such as would baffle officers and men and make the ships completely strange to them. All those ships should be as precisely alike as it was possible to make them, so that men who were at home in one of them should be equally at home in all. He should, therefore, like to appeal to his right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty to use his influence at the Board of Admiralty, for the purpose of seeing that no changes were introduced into the internal arrangements of vessels of practically the same shape and size, except for the best of reasons. It was most essential to the interests of the Public Service that all ships of the same class should be alike. He believed he was right in saying that the reason why changes had been made in the *Majestic* and *Magnificent*, and why those ships had been made larger than the *Royal Sovereign*, was because they were to carry a larger coal supply. It would be injudicious to blame the Government for enlarging those ships in order to enable them to carry a greater coal supply, seeing that they were ships which would have to fight at distant stations. Reference had been made to tubulous boilers. The information he possessed did not enable him to criticise the introduction of tubulous boilers, but he should say that the reason given for their introduction by the First Lord in his Minute was not to his mind at all satisfactory. It was said there that the tubulous boilers were introduced with a view to increasing the speed. But if boilers of the old principle were quite right for the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* they would be quite right for the other large ships

Sir E. J. Reed

we were going to build. He could not understand the argument that these boilers were introduced because high speed and great power were required in the vessels. He wished to say a word about the minor question of the nomenclature not only of the ships, but of the classes of those ships. The nomenclature of the classes of the ships was discreditable to the intelligence of the Admiralty and its staff. He would only give one instance. Every ship that was put down in the Admiralty list as a "protected cruiser" was a cruiser of which the first characteristic was that she had no protection whatever, her engines and boilers being the only things on her that were protected. The late Admiral Faraday, when he was in this country, said to him—"The one thing to bear in mind is this: never deceive your sailor. Your sailor will go into battle on anything; he will incur any danger you like to subject him to if only you do not deceive him; but if you tell him he is going to fight under protection, and it turns out that he is not under protection, he loses heart at once." It was a monstrous thing to send our seamen and officers to incur all the chances and mischances of the Naval Service abroad, in what were truly unprotected vessels, knowing that if an accident happened to their vessels they would be held up to the world as men who had had a protected vessel placed in their charge. Neither the present or the late Government were responsible for this system of classification, and he only mentioned the matter in order to get it put right. He had listened with great care to the speech of the late Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood), and he thought it had been much of the type of that of the ex-Civil Lord (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett). The right hon. Gentleman had laid immense stress on the non-commencement of certain ships. But what did it matter, if the expenditure was not wasted, whether it was devoted to this ship or that ship? If all the ships that were being built were really wanted why should there be any complaint because the Government, in the exigencies of the Service, thought it better to finish one class of vessel before another? His right hon. Friend (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) had stated that the reason why new vessels were not laid down before was that it was thought better to push the existing vessels to completion. He (Sir E. J. Reed) thought that was a perfect answer. It was, in his opinion, much better to complete the unfinished vessels than to lay down new ones. The Admiralty did not deserve the reproach which had been levelled against them in connection with the building of the *Majestic* and the *Magnificent*. It was perfectly true that, when building took place, sometimes in open docks, it was desirable to do as much preliminary work as possible under a shed before placing any of it in a dock at all. This, he understood, was the system which had been pursued in regard to these vessels, and it had been found so advantageous, not only in commencing vessels, but in sending them forward, that he thought it a little too bad, after an explanation had once been given, for gentlemen to again reproach the Government on the subject. He should have been very glad indeed if the Naval Service could have undergone greater expansion. Several gentlemen had spoken about the proposals of the Government as a programme. It was a programme to this extent, that it dealt with the ships which the Government proposed to build, but it would be for the Government who were in Office at the end of this year to say what the programme of the following year should be. It might be true that in regard both to contract work and dockyard work the Government that was in Office at the end of the year would be under certain obligations, but he thought the House would be disposed to abstain from adverse criticism, merely because the expenditure of the present year must necessarily mean an expansion of the Navy next year, which would be even greater than that of this year.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, the hon. Member who had just sat down always commanded attention, because he spoke with a knowledge which few men possessed. He was sorry, however, that the hon. Member had introduced his old argument about the 8 or 10 ships on which he would not like to trust a relative. If the hon. Member was not satisfied with those ships let him exert his great influence with the present Government, and induce them to increase the present programme and to build more ships of a type he was satisfied with. He agreed with the hon. Member in thinking it was not fair to compare the numbers of our ships with those of the ships of Foreign Navies. The true comparison was that of the work which each Fleet had to do. He always took exception to the argument which was so often used that our Fleet should be equal to the combined Fleets of any two Powers. The true comparison was, as he had said, that of the work to be done by the different Fleets. Naval men would, no doubt, have preferred that the policy of the Government should have been embodied in an Act of Parliament, so as to ensure continuity of policy. Though he did not doubt that the intentions of the Government were good, he feared that when the hot fever passed away they might not, if they were in power next year, give the same evidence as they were giving this year of the sincerity of their convictions. Great stress had been laid by various speakers on the objections to the action of the Government in ordering the torpedo-boat destroyers without the authority of Parliament. He wished to speak as a non-Party man on naval questions, and he certainly rejoiced that the Admiralty had practically forced the political branch of the Service to get the permission of the Treasury to order these torpedo-boat destroyers. He was prepared to think that the Naval Lords might have had good reasons for not disclosing their policy in the matter until they were masters of the situation. It was well known to those who had studied the question that the authorities of a friendly Power did not look much to the defence of the Channel by men-of-war, but had the idea of concentrating their battleships at Toulon. The hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. E. J. C. Morton) had urged the consideration of certain grievances which affected certain classes of men in the Service, especially with regard to the promotion and rank of warrant officers. He could not urge that policy too strongly, as he thought it would give great encouragement to the seamen in the Service. He thanked the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Arnold-Forster) for his very able speech, which showed a grasp of naval questions that was rare to find in a gentleman who did not belong to the profession. He must, however, take exception to the hon. Member's remark that naval men were too slow in adopting breechloaders. The reason why the British Navy did not go in for breechloaders for many years was that the Service had suffered very badly through bad breechloaders being supplied to it. He believed it was not until after the Franco-German War that a satisfactory breechclosing apparatus was invented. As to the censure that had been passed on the Admiralty for not converting the guns of the *Monarch* and other vessels, he thought it was the duty of the Admiralty to see that the taxpayers' money was not unduly thrown away, in view especially of the fact that muzzleloading guns fired as accurately, though not as rapidly, as breechloaders. The suggestion that torpedo vessels should be manned with yachtsmen was not a bad one, although, of course, it would always be necessary to have certain expert gunners and officers on board each torpedo boat. His hon. and gallant Friend (Commander Bethell) had gone in rather strongly for the smaller class of battleships of the *Centurion* and *Barfleur* type. He (Admiral Field) only wished that those who took that view had had the privilege of attending a discussion at a recent meeting of the naval architects upon a Paper read by Mr. White on the subject. He (Admiral Field) examined Mr. White's arguments and found that not a word was to be said in favour of the smaller vessels, except that they could go through the Suez Canal and act as flag-ships on the China and Australia Stations. Mr. White, in his Paper, had said that seven *Centurions* might be obtained for the cost of five *Royal Sovereigns*, but he himself preferred a smaller number of large ships to a greater number of smaller vessels. He would leave to others the discussion of the question whether there was in the increased number any compensation for the loss of individual power. Arguments had been put forward in favour of a class which would carry more coals; and though that argument had been knocked away, because it was true the smaller vessels equalled the larger ships in speed and in coal endurance, at the same time they were inferior both in offensive and defensive power, and could not hold their own against foreign ships of war, whose armour they could not pierce, but whose guns could pierce their armour. It was important that the public mind should be properly informed on that subject. To effect the necessary saving the calibre of the guns must be reduced as well as the thickness of armour, both on belt and barbettes. The Admiralty, therefore, were carrying out their duty in giving preference to the larger to the smaller class of ships, however attractive the prospect of having seven instead of five might be. He had listened with pained surprise to the statement of the hon. Member opposite, who would lead the House and country to believe that the seamen in the Naval Service were discontented. All he could say was that the officers in the Navy knew that their men were not discontented, and if there was any real ground for complaint on the part of the men their officers would be the first to bring it under the notice of the Admiralty. The officers knew their men and the men trusted their officers, and he defied any hon. Member to attempt to sow distrust between naval officers and their men, whose best friends they knew were the officers who commanded them, and worst enemies such advocates as the hon. Member opposite. The hon. Gentleman and his friends might do good service in protecting the seamen of the Mercantile Marine, but nothing of that sort was wanted in Her Majesty's Fleet. Another speech, too, that of the late Secretary to the Admiralty, had made him very unhappy, because it appeared to imply that he objected to the construction of the torpedo-boat destroyers. Naval Lords at the Admiralty must, with the information at their command, know better than anybody outside the preparations being made by Foreign Powers; and, in his opinion, the Admiralty had rightly determined to supply our deficiencies in that respect, and to supply us with well-designed boats for the purpose, instead of following the example set at the time of the Russian scare of 1884, when 50 worthless and ill-designed vessels were ordered and built in a hurry without the sanction of Parliament. The Admiralty were quite right under the circumstances in ordering those torpedo-boat destroyers without saying a word to the House or anybody about them. Another point raised was with regard to the troopships. He thought the criticisms of the right hon. Member for the Ormskirk Division with regard to troopships were unfair and unfortunate. The right hon. Gentleman stated that transport by Imperial troopships cost £6 a head more than by private ships. But the last Return on the subject, presented in 1891, showed that the cost of conveyance by troopship was £8 14s. 2d. per head, while the cost by hired ships was £10 10s. 4d. The Commander-in-Chief and Lord Roberts were opposed to giving up the Imperial troopships, and he held that on the ground of health, comfort, and discipline they ought to be maintained for the transport of Her Majesty's troops. It was not fair for the right hon. Gentleman to say, in the absence of facts up to recent dates, that transport by the Imperial troopships cost so much more than by private vessels. It was the duty of this country to treat the defenders of the Empire in a proper and humane way, and they ought not to have to put up with inferior accommodation even if it could be obtained on the dirt-cheap principle. The right hon. Gentleman had urged that naval officers should acquire nautical skill and experience in the Mercantile Marine, but he did not think they would learn much by ploughing the Atlantic in merchant vessels. Complaint was made that the Fleet was not long enough at sea. But that was simply a question of coal consumption, and nobody had objected more strongly to the expenditure incurred in steaming at high speed than the right hon. Gentleman himself. Then the late Secretary to the Admiralty had complained that the boys in the Navy were not properly trained. That was like Satan rebuking sin. When in Office there was no greater enemy of the training squadron than the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman wished to annihilate the training squadron, and it was owing not to him, but to the Naval Lords, that it still existed. He hoped the Naval Lords would adhere to their opinion, for that squadron was the best training school the Navy had. A good deal had been said about the deficiency in engineers. If they were in want of engineers, he presumed the Admiralty would know how to tempt them into the Service. He believed that the fierce competition in our Mercantile Service was responsible for the number of foreigners employed in ships of the Mercantile Marine, and he would heartily support any scheme which would bring back to employment in that Service a larger proportion of our own countrymen in place of the foreigners now employed. It was a deplorable fact that the reserve of British seamen on whom we should have to depend in time of war was a diminishing quantity. He must be pardoned for referring to another objectionable observation made by the late Secretary to the Admiralty in regard to Captain Hall, of the *Resolution*, whose conduct in putting back to an English port under the circumstances was, he contended, perfectly justified and ought not to have been called in question, especially by the late Secretary to the Admiralty. The captain of a vessel had always a discretion in commanding it, and the exercise of that discretion ought not to be called in question without some very good cause. In regard to the *personnel* of the Navy, naval officers were greatly exercised at the present time as to how they were going to find men to man the ships now in course of construction. On all hands he heard that the Admiralty were at their wit's end to man even ships at present being placed in commission. The officials at the Admiralty were no doubt judges in that matter, but naval men outside were not bad judges of the necessities of the case. A distinguished officer had told him that day that on one occasion he had asked permission to man his own ship in his own way, and he recruited 300 of the best Scotch fishermen on the coast that he could get. Those were the men they ought to get hold of to put into the Second Class Reserve, but they did not offer them any attraction. This was for the right hon. Gentleman to make a note of. It was the opinion of a man who knew what he was talking about. They did not offer enough inducement to enrol these men in the Second Class Reserve. They were splendid men. They did not want men to go aloft, but they did want men with their sea legs and with some nautical instincts, who could handle ropes and understand steering. They were as strong as giants and had a splendid fighting spirit in them, and they only wanted a little training. This gallant Admiral he was speaking of got 300 of these men, and, having got them, the Admiralty stole them from him afterwards. But the gallant Admiral was one too many for the Admiralty. He met the ship in the Downs which had these men on board, and, being senior officer of the two ships, gave a written order to deliver 100 men at once, and got them. This was an interesting anecdote, and the point was that there was a large reserve of men on the coast of Scotland, and they had not got hold of half the number of men they ought to have. The Second Class Reserve was not up to the standard of the Scotch fishermen. He was sure his gallant friend who had pressed this on him so strongly was on the right tack. They ought to do more to get hold of these Scotch fishermen. They would be most valuable when trained, as they possessed all the necessary requisites except trial at the guns, and they would be amenable to discipline in a very short time. But they did not give a large enough retaining fee. The First Class Reserve men had a very fair fee and pension ; the Second Class fee was a thing not worth mentioning. Some remarks had been made about the alterations of the Service, and this was a case in which he thought attention was wanted. He was certain they wanted more men than they had, and here was a way to obtain them. He then wished to draw attention to the Naval Ordnance Vote. Allusion had been made in the Debate by various speakers, especially by the hon. Member for Belfast, about arming our cruisers with machine guns. In the Vote they had £356,000 put down for guns of various classes, of which 558 were quick-firing guns, but they were not described, as far as he could see. There was a quick-firing gun now of such great importance, that he hoped the Admiralty would not give an order for any more Hotchkiss quick-firing guns until experiments were carried out in these new 37 millimetre Maxim guns, and were reported on by experts. All officers were of the opinion that torpedo-boat destroyers ought to be armed with the very best machine guns they could find. The way to destroy torpedo-boats would be to hail and rain shot and shell on them. One of these guns was tried in Russia recently against five Hotchkiss guns, each gun being manned with three men only. They were tried in a gunboat steaming full speed past a torpedo, and the Russian Naval Technical Committee reported the fact that one Maxim gun with three men, both in rapidity of fire and effect, was superior to the five Hotchkiss guns. He had no interest in the Hotchkiss or any other gun, but he wanted the Admiralty to take care that they were not supplying the Hotchkiss gun until the experts had reported on the new one. Naval men were all agreed that the only way to repel torpedo attacks at night with certainty was with these Maxim guns. Nothing could live under them. They had all heard of the performances of the Maxim gun in South Africa. He next called attention to a gun at Portland which was not mentioned, though he had been promised that a sum of money would be put down in the Vote for the mounting of the gun. But he did not see it down. He wanted to say a final word about a matter which was very dear to his soul. The Hartington Commission in Clause 36 recommended that through the great mass of business which came under the Naval Lords, and the whole of which could not possibly receive their full personal attention, it appeared to them that the absence of the naval assistants to the Lords of the Admiralty might account for some of the evils which Sir Geoffrey Hornby and others considered to exist. They further, in Section 39, considered that it would be of advantage that each member of the Board were required to prepare annual Reports of the condition and working of the Apprentice Service placed under his immediate control. That was what they wanted. That was what the Committee upstairs asked, and what they had never had. This practice would tend to mark that individual responsibility for administration of well-defined duties which they desired to enforce. They should get that brought before the Board, and ask the First Lord of the Admiralty to act upon it. It was the Report of the Royal Commission in a strong recommendation that that policy should be carried out. They recommended elsewhere that naval assistants should be given to the Naval Lords. Sir Anthony Hoskins, in his evidence before the Committee upstairs on the Navy Estimates, said he was satisfied with the present system of administration of the Admiralty as a Board, though he did not say it was perfect, but he considered it answered all purposes. He could not suggest any improvement, except that each Naval Lord should have a naval assistant, and this would then meet all requirements. Why could not they get these naval assistants? Every year nearly he had asked for them, and they were asked for by the Commission, but they could not get them. They recommended, as an additional reason for these naval assistants to the Naval Lords, that it would be giving the younger officers of the Service, who might some day occupy these great posts of responsibility, most valuable experience for future use, and they would be able to relieve their naval chiefs of a great deal of the detail work of an inferior kind which they could do just as well as their chiefs. It appeared from this Report, also, that the First Sea Lord had not sufficient time at his disposal, but the Service did not wish to see him relieved of his administrative duties, because he would lose touch with the Service. But they did feel that if this recommendation of the Commission was acted upon it would be an enormous advantage to the Service. It would cost little or nothing to the country, because there were many officers now serving on half-pay who, if put in this position, would be of enormous service to their naval chiefs, and they would be doing good and making excellent preparation for some future time. What Sir Geoffrey Hornby wanted was to see more naval men in the Admiralty. He ventured to urge this not long ago in the Press, and urged it then with all respect before the Committee. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not forget this point and the others he had pressed upon him. He hoped he would follow the good example set by the Secretary of State for War when the Army Estimates were under discussion. Someone complained of grievances of the Volunteer Force, and the Secretary of State for War immediately said he would grant a Committee to inquire into the grievances. Would the right hon. Gentleman in the same amiable spirit grant a Committee to consider the various grievances which had been put before him and the Civil Lord on former occasions and again on that night? They had dealt with the dockyarders because they could concentrate their political power, but they did not pay attention to the grievances of seamen and stokers because they were dispersed all over the globe and could not concentrate their political power. He was afraid he had trespassed rather long upon the time of the Committee, but the time he had taken was not too long for an important discussion. On the previous day they had the House crammed to suffocation over a question of minor importance, but it was a curious thing that when the great naval power of England was under discussion they had comparatively empty Benches.

Sir E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) wished to draw attention to the fact that when this Vote was before the Committee before, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Admiralty and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War rather sprang a statement upon the House to the effect that they had determined upon introducing the eight hours system into the naval dockyards and into the arsenals. He did not hesitate to say that when it was examined by the country it would be looked upon as a far more important question than at the moment it might have struck the House. He thought it was only to be expected that certain parties throughout the country would immediately take the opportunity of endeavouring to follow that example as far as they possibly could. He would put a few figures before the Committee to give an idea to what extent the eight hours system would affect the commercial interests of this country compared with the previous nine hours system. In the first place, it was a most gratuitous act on the part of the Government to introduce the eight hours system. From the representations made by some hon. Members representing dockyards, amongst all the grievances he was not aware that the question of the hours of work was brought forward with that degree of prominence, and was urged with that vehemence which many other points were, and he thought the Government should have hesitated very much before they should have come forward and volunteered to grant not exactly a request, but a sort of dream of an idea, that the House must please certain sections of workmen in the dockyard, although his own feeling was that it was more to gain the approval of a section of the workpeople outside the dockyards. The only section, so far as he was aware, which had brought any pressure to bear upon public opinion in the matter of eight hours had been the miners, and he thought it was well understood, from the very full inquiry which was now being held by the Labour Commission, that there were very divided opinions even amongst the miners themselves. He thought this action of the Government was very disrespectful indeed to the Labour Commission, which they had practically proved. Even with regard to dockyards, where there was now an enormous amount of machinery applied, it became less and less important that men should, by any special extra exertion on their own part, be looked upon as being able to do as much in eight hours as they did before in nine. He felt that this action of the Admiralty in introducing the eight hours system was springing upon the industrial interests of this country a very serious crisis. He looked upon it that it would be the cause in this country of many millions a year of dead loss. The men throughout the country made no complaint whatever about the hours of labour, and the change was made now when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had an empty purse. The time chosen by the Government for making this experiment was most inopportune. He thought the Leader of the Opposition would be able to draw the attention of the country to the very grave mistake which the Admiralty had made. With reference to the question of manning, he thought the Mercantile Marine suffered as much as the Navy for the want of apprentices; and if in any way the Government could encourage the practice, he should be very glad if it became once more compulsory that there should be a certain proportion of apprentices, not only in sailing ships, but in steamers, throughout the country, so that there should be a rising generation, as in the olden days, of those who, having embraced the Mercantile Marine or the Navy as a pursuit, might stick to it for the rest of their lives. He thought they would then not require to bring in so many foreigners to man our fleets; not that we should grumble about foreigners coming to seek work from us, seeing that we went all over the world to obtain advantages from them. He expressed regret that the Government had, he believed, abandoned the rating of the workmen in the dockyards. It was only fair that there should be a difference in the wages of men who did different classes of work. He had heard some say that if pensions were reduced and more wages given it would be to the advantage of the men. But, in case of war, they wanted the men in the dockyards to be perfectly loyal and true—not going to strike and give up their work at the very time when their services were most required, so that what between rating and pensions they would be able to retain a class of men in the dockyards in time of war which on no other principle they would be able to count upon. He hoped the First Lord of the Admiralty would not lose sight of the remarks which had been made in reference to the improvement in the status of engine-room artificers. He therefore urged the Secretary to the Admiralty to seriously consider this important matter, and to provide under certain conditions and regulations that artificers in warships should be classified as warrant officers. That would meet the wishes of very many first-class men; it would be to them almost equal to an increase of pay, and it would make them more loyal to the Service, to which in the future they would be more and more invaluable.

Mr. E. J. C. MORTON (Devonport) desired to say a word or two by way of enforcing some of the remarks which had been made in the course of the Debate, and the concluding remarks of the hon. Member who had just sat down. He would not incur the wrath of the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Admiral Field) by suggesting that the men in the Navy were discontented; but he would refer to the grievances mentioned by the hon. Member for West Belfast, and show the accuracy of the hon. Member's statement in that respect. He would take simply the broad fact that of the men who joined the Navy 40 per cent. retired after 10 years' service at the average age of 28. That did not imply much content with the Service. There was no profession, trade, or industry in which that could be said of those employed in it after a long training and an elaborate apprenticeship. What became of these men who left the Navy at the rate of 300 a year? Some went into the service of the great Ocean Liners; and it was absolutely true, as had been said by the Member for Middlesbrough earlier in the evening, that the American Navy was almost manned altogether by men of this class who had left the English Navy after only 10 years' service. He recollected a speech made by Mr. Bayard, now the Ambassador to the Court of St. James for the United States, delivered at the time when, as Secretary to the Navy, he was answering the proposition that there should be a training school for the American Navy, in which that gentleman said that there was no need of such a thing, because Great Britain trained their sailors for them, and they could get, at the age of 28 years, the best trained men for the American Navy.

COMMANDER BETHELL: I think that was during the American Civil War.

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: My hon. Friend has got hold of an entirely wrong set of figures. Of the seamen 65½ per cent. re-engage, and of the stokers 84½ per cent. re-engage. That disposes of the argument of my hon. Friend.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON: These men are re-engaged as what?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: As seamen and stokers.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON said, what he desired to point out was this: that to keep the men who left the Service at the end of 10 years a largely-increased expenditure was not necessarily involved. But consider what they lost by these men leaving the Navy at such an early age! In training alone, apart altogether from pay, it cost for an able-bodied seaman £200, and not only so, but a seaman was not completely trained until he reached the age of 25. It was only after the men had reached 25 that they got the full value of the £200 that had been spent upon each of them. Therefore, as regarded 33 per cent. of the men who joined the Navy, they only got three years' good out of the money that had been expended on their training. If they could induce these same men to go on for another 10 years that would mean they would get four times the value out of them that they got at present, and all that was now lost by the fact that these men left the Service.

ADMIRAL FIELD: A third of them come back at the end of 12 months.

MR. E. J. C. MORTON said, he was speaking of those who did not re-join. He maintained that the amount of money they lost in that way was a considerable set-off against the amount of money that it would require to retain these men for an extra 10 years' service. The question was, what was needed to retain them? It was perfectly obvious that the men could not be kept in the Service when they reached the summit of their career at 25 years of age, and had to wait till 55 before being entitled to their pension. To render the Service sufficiently attractive it was absolutely necessary to open a higher rank to the warrant officers, as was done with the non-commissioned officers in the Army and the Marines. There should be created a fleet rank for carpenter, boatswain, and gunner equal to that of the lieutenant, and commanding the same pay. At the present time there were warrant officers actually employed on lieutenants' duties, and he could not see what objection there could be to recognising the rank of these men and giving them the rank and pay of lieutenants and increasing their number, as it needed to be increased. The warrant officers were willing to undergo an adequate examination for the posts. It only cost £200 to train an ordinary seaman, whereas it cost £1,200 to train a lieutenant, so that it would in that respect be a saving. He had never been able to understand what objection the Admiralty had to putting the Navy in the same position as the Army in regard to the warrant officers, and he trusted they would now see their way to accede to the urgent appeal which was made on behalf of this class of men.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) : I think the Committee will feel we are discussing this most important subject this evening under some disadvantages, disadvantages which naturally attach to a position of affairs, and for which I am not disposed to hold the Government entirely responsible. It is a misfortune, to a certain extent, that it is so difficult to be able to have one consecutive discussion in regard to naval affairs, taking the subjects in order and keeping them together. We have had a most interesting Debate this evening. Occasionally it has turned upon men, occasionally on the shipbuilding programme, and occasionally on finance, and it is somewhat difficult to arrive at what may be the general feeling of the Committee on any particular subject. I think it would be better if we could discuss a larger number of subjects with the Speaker in the Chair; but right hon. Gentlemen opposite will remember that an appeal was made to us that it was indispensable to finish the financial matters connected with the Navy by a given day, and therefore we fell in with the view of the Government that the Speaker should leave the Chair without any further discussion. But I think it has somewhat damaged the possibility of keeping the subjects as much together as could be desired. There is another disadvantage under which we have laboured to-night—namely, the necessary absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—an absence which we all deplore knowing the cause to which alone it is due. In his absence it would have been difficult to open up some of those questions connected with finance which are so extremely important looking at the general programme. We have a programme now before the Committee which I believe it would be easy to prove is a programme as large as the programme of the Naval Defence Act; but we have not yet been honoured with any statement of the total expenditure that will be incurred, and it will be our duty to elicit some more positive declaration from Her Majesty's Government as to the future expense which will be incurred. We do not wish to know the particular expenditure on any particular ship, but we want to have some general idea as to the progress of expenditure during the next few years, a knowledge which is absolutely indispensable to this House if we are to form any judgment of the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it will be our duty, and probably that of others, to discuss this arrangement of Her Majesty's Government and to contrast it with those conditions of execution which we believe to be essential to carrying out the plan and which we embodied in the Naval Defence Act, and I am sure the Government will not think it unreasonable if, in the absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I defer my remarks upon the financial question. I think it would be unjust if I endeavoured to open up such a wide field of discussion to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to reply; but there are one or two points outside finance which I would lay before the House in the few minutes remaining to me. For my own part, I am certainly disposed to congratulate the Government on the fact that they have submitted to the House large proposals which we hope further explanation may prove to be adequate to the situation, and I am sure there is a general disposition on this side of the House to import only a minimum of Party controversy into the Debates. But right hon. Gentlemen opposite must remember that if there is to be an absence of Party controversy, which for my part I most earnestly desire, no Party capital is to be made out of the Navy outside the House. There have been strong remarks made outside the House, and a controversial tone has been introduced outside the House by some Members of Her Majesty's Government—the Home Secretary and the Civil Lord of the Admiralty—but I hope that in the continuance of these discussions it will be possible to discuss the programme and the means of carrying it out without any resort to Party controversy. Her Majesty's Government is not only to be congratulated on the fact of their programme, but also upon some of the circumstances which they have in their favour. I am not only glad for the sake of the country that this distinct advance is to be made in the number of ships. There is another circumstance on which I congratulate the Government, the House, and the public, and that is the remarkable unanimity with which the proposals of the Government, independent of details, have been received in the House of Commons. I believe that unanimity is worth a good many ironclads. There may have been certain sections in the country, who, no doubt from conscientious motives, have rather put forward the view that there were alarmists in the country who were forcing naval expenditure for other than essential reasons ; but that view must be discarded now for good. It is strong evidence which we are able to give to foreign countries that practically we are unanimous in our determination and our desire to push shipbuilding up to that point. It will show that we are dependent on no entangling alliances, that we are not dependent on the discretion of any other Power ; but we are ready for every occasion which may arise. It is possible that some disappointment may be felt by those who provide the sinews of war that there is so much difference of opinion as to the ships which should be built and as to whether the expenditure is wise or not. It is a most disheartening circumstance that every successive Board of Admiralty is never able to secure a fair consensus of opinion either from experts or naval officers. My hon. and gallant Friend who spoke a few minutes ago is perfectly acquainted with that. He said the naval officers agree to differ. Well, among the most able of the Lords of the Admiralty are some of the very best naval officers. My hon. and gallant Friend appeared to speak as if the official element was a non-naval element. Surely that is unjust to the Lords of the Admiralty. I was at the Admiralty for some time, and I remember well the officers by whom I was advised. There was no one who gave me more constant advice than the late lamented Admiral Tyron, whose loss we all deplore. He was constantly at my side. He was fresh from contact with the junior captains of the Service, and he was able to represent their views to me. On the other side there was Sir A. Milne and Admiral Beauchamp Seymour—all thoroughly knowing what was wanted. I must not go into more names or I might omit some. I congratulate the Government on the officers whom they now have as their advisers. I admit that when I was at the Admiralty it was one of the most extraordinarily anxious matters to be able to discriminate between the views of different schools of naval officers. My hon. and gallant Friend behind me said he had never known any naval officer who had recommended the low freeboard system. [Commander BETHELL : No, no !] I so understood him ; but this system was reported upon by a Commission composed of representatives of naval officers and scientific men, and that Report was signed, amongst others, by Admiral Hornby. It was said by naval officers that half the money was misspent, and my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast (Mr. Wolff), himself a great shipbuilder, said that many millions had been badly spent. I make these remarks because, notwithstanding all that has been said of the differences which exist between experts and naval officers, when we come to look at the matter in a practical way we know that we have ships that, with all their faults, are competent to meet the ships of other countries.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow.

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.—(No. 182.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside) : I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. It is precisely the same as the Bill of last year, which was interrupted by the close of the Session. It is purely a Consolidation Bill. All parties have agreed to it—those representing the shipping interests, as well as those representing the sailors, and I, therefore, hope there will be no opposition to it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, he did not intend to oppose the Bill, but he would like to be assured that any Amendments in the Bill which made it different from the Bill of 1893 had been approved of by the Joint Committee; also that the Bill was purely a Consolidation Bill, and that nothing had been introduced into it which departed from the general policy of the Merchant Shipping Acts.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Speaking on behalf of a large section of shipowners, I hope the House will allow the Second Reading of this Bill. It is a Consolidation Bill, so far as it is possible to make it. It is clearly not a reform of the Shipping Laws, which need reform, but before reform consolidation is necessary.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): It is not a Consolidation Bill; it is far more, and I must object to it.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I can assure the House that it is a Consolidation Bill. On all hands it is desired that this work, which has now been going on for years, should be completed. The Bill is going to the same Committee as last year.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Is it not the fact that the Bill creates two new felonies?

Mr. MUNDELLA: It creates no change whatever in the law.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I must object.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I believe that no one would have been more anxious for the Second Reading of the Bill than the hon. Gentleman, and I trust he will not interrupt the work of the Committee.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, that if the right hon. Gentleman really gave him an assurance that the Bill was a Consolidation Bill, and that if it turned out to be more he would accept Amendments limiting it to consolidation, he would make no further objection. He had read the Bill carefully; he thought it was more than a Consolidation Bill, and a Bill which ought to be discussed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

MOTION.

LAND ACTS (IRELAND):

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable."—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, he should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was willing to accept the addition to the terms of Reference which he had put on the Paper—namely, in line 5, after "1891" to insert,

"And the effect upon the interests of tenants, encumbrancers, and landlords respectively in holdings dealt with under the said Acts."

Unless the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to accept that extension he must oppose the Motion, as, in his opinion, it was necessary that the Order of Reference should be widened. He thought, also, that the House should have some statement from the right hon. Gentleman himself as to the purview of the Reference—whether it was intended to limit the action of the Committee simply to procedure, or whether the Committee would have the power to inquire afresh into the results of land legislation with regard to individual rents? The matter was of great complexity, and would practically land them in a re-trial of a large number of cases. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would accept his Amendment, and unless he was able to do so they must ask for a discussion, in order that they might hear fully the objects of the Government in appointing the Committee.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not think that my hon. Friend, or the hon. Gentlemen who sit near him, have any reason to complain of a want of a conciliatory spirit having been shown on the part of the Government in this matter. The hon. Member must admit that I have from time to time altered the form of this Reference with a view to meeting the objections—though I did not think them well founded—of the hon. Member and others. The Order of Reference, as it now stands, is, in my opinion, not at all an adequate description of the inquiry, which I think all Members of the House who understand the present position of the Land Question in Ireland would desire to have. I understood that when I put the Reference on the Paper in the form in which it now appears, that it would dispose finally of all the objections which could be taken to the appointment of this Committee. The words suggested by the hon. Member appear to me to add nothing to the value of the Reference, nor to import any new significance into the Order of Reference. I have made so many efforts to meet objections that I find myself unable to go any further in the way of assenting to the addition of the words proposed. The hon. Member asks that a full statement should be made as to the broad object of this Committee. I think that the object is sufficiently defined in the Order of Reference, and I should be wasting the time of the House without any purpose whatever if I entered into a general statement of the object of the inquiry. I do not believe that this inquiry in the form in which it is now presented to the House is objected to by any hon. Member opposite except the hon. Member himself. The majority of hon. Members from Ireland representing Irish interests of every kind are in favour of the Reference as it now stands, and I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his objection and let the Committee get to work.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he would like to point out that on Thursday last he had asked the Chief Secretary a question on this point. The Leader of the Opposition rose and asked the Chief Secretary to confine the Reference to the first portion, and stated that if that were done it would meet with the approbation of all Parties in the House, and that the Chief Secretary might get to work after that as soon as he chose. The Chief Secretary, on consideration, amended the Reference in that direction, and it now carried out what the Leader of the Opposition desired on Thursday last. He could not see that if the words of the hon. Member were added to the Reference much would be gained, especially as his object could be attained by the Reference as it stood. No Irish Member opposed the Committee or the form of Reference—the opposition to the Reference had been entirely left in the hands of English Members—and he thought the hon. Gentleman ought to allow the Committee to get to work on this matter which had excited great interest in Ireland.

Mr. BRODRICK asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consent to move the Reference on Thursday instead of that evening, so that an effort might be made to come to some arrangement by that time? The Leader of the Opposition could not attend that night.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Leader of the Opposition has already stated his view. I cannot see that anything is to be gained by further delay until Thursday, and therefore I cannot assent to the hon. Gentleman's request.

Mr. BRODRICK: I object.

Motion postponed till Thursday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (SITES) BILL.
(No. 90.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

***Mr. J. E. ELLIS** (Nottingham, Rushcliffe), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said, it had received the assent of the present Leader of the Opposition, when leaving the House in 1892. Last year it had passed through all its stages in the Commons, and had gone up to the Lords. They had not had time last Session to deal in the Commons with the Lords' Amendments, but he was able to say that the promoters of the Bill so desired to meet all objections that they had incorporated in the Bill a large number of the Lords' Amendments. He hoped, therefore, that no objection would be raised to the Bill, but that it would be allowed to go to the Standing Committee on Law, before which it would be thoroughly examined.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis.*)

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, that the previous evening the hon. Member for Rushcliffe had voted with the Government for the withdrawal of the whole time of private Members this Session——

*MR. J. E. ELLIS: Not the whole time. There are Wednesdays and Friday evenings for unofficial Members.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN said that, under the circumstances, no exceptional advantage should be given to anybody, and he therefore objected to the Second Reading of the Bill.

Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 3) BILL.
(No. 115.)

Read a second time, and committed.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 131.)

Read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

MARGARINE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. Plunkett, Bill to amend "The Margarine Act, 1887," and "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. Plunkett, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. J. Redmond, Sir R. Paget, Mr. Barton, and Mr. Maurice Healy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 152.]

ADVERTISEMENT REGULATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Boulnois, Bill to enable County Councils to make bye-laws with respect to Advertisements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Boulnois, Sir E. Clarke, Mr. Caine, Mr. Darling, Mr. Benson, Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Smith-Barry, and Mr. Vicary Gibbs.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 153.]

CROWN LANDS BILL.—(NO. 4.)

Read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented Three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

CHARITY COMMISSION.

The Select Committee on the Charity Commission was nominated of,—Mr. Egerton Allen, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. Freeman-Mitford, Mr. Howell, Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. J. W. Lowther, Mr. Oldroyd, Sir S. Northcote, Mr. George Russell, Sir A. Scoble, Mr. Strachey, and Mr. Wickham.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888 (LONDON.)

Copy presented,—of Order of the County Council of London for transferring parts of the United Parishes of Saint Giles-in-the-Fields and Saint George, Bloomsbury, and of Saint Andrew, Holborn-above-Bars, united with Saint George the Martyr, to the Parish of Saint Pancras [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

AGRICULTURE (ROYAL COMMISSION) (SCOTLAND.)

Copy presented,—of Report by Mr. James Hope (Assistant Commissioner) on the Counties of Perth, Fife, Forfar, and Aberdeen [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL) (VICTORIA.)

Copy presented,—of Digest of the Statistics (Victoria) for 1892 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION.

Copy ordered, "of Treasury Minute, dated the 5th day of April 1894, relating to the claims to pension of persons appointed to the clerical establishment of the Registry of Deeds, Ireland, between the 19th day of April 1859 and the 1st day of January 1865."—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 64.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 11th April 1894.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CHARING CROSS, EUSTON, AND HAMPSTEAD RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) objected. This and another Bill were not down "by Order," and he presumed, therefore, that it was open to any Member to object.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Does the hon. Member object? As a matter of fact, I understand there is no objection.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that if there was to be any lengthened Debate on Private Business to-day he would certainly object.

Mr. SPEAKER said, it was understood that there was not to be any lengthened Debate.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Then I do not object.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

SOUTHWARK AND VAUXHALL WATER BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) opposed the Motion.

Mr. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) said, he would ask leave to withdraw Clause 13 of the Bill, which gave power to take additional water from the Thames, and it would be understood that, under the pressure of the representations made by the London County Council and the Thames Conservancy, the clause had been withdrawn.

Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND said, that if the clause was withdrawn he would withdraw his opposition.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said that, on the understanding that the clause which provided taking water from the Thames was withdrawn, he would not at this stage offer any objection to the Bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LAND TENURE (IRELAND) BILL.

(No. 7.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said, the Bill which he had the honour to move laid down no new doctrine and enunciated no new principle with regard to the tenure of land in Ireland. It was a Bill simple in its character and designed to give effect to the intentions of Parliament when it passed the Land Act of 1881 and the subsequent Acts dealing with the Irish Land Laws. It would be found, he hoped, to be a non-contentious measure. Just and equitable in its provisions, he trusted it would meet with the support of every fair-minded man in that House who desired to see that the Land Laws of Ireland should have a fair chance in finally settling the Irish Land Question. The Land Act of 1881 provided that a tenant should not be charged rent on his own improvements or those of his predecessor in title. Had this provision been carried out in the spirit and intention of Parliament the Land Question in Ireland would have been practically settled now. But what happened in the celebrated case of "Adams *v.* Dunseath?" The majority of the Court held that 20 years' quiet enjoyment was full compensation to the tenant for his improvements. The effect of that was that the vast and overwhelming majority of tenants who had fair rents fixed felt that justice had not been done them. Especially was that so in Ulster. The tenants of that Province, under the partial security of the Ulster custom, were encouraged to improve their holdings. Where that custom prevailed in its entirety the tenant realised the full value of his improvements by the sale of his tenant right, but the desire of the tenant was to retain possession; and, in that case, what he looked to was the quiet enjoyment of his holding at a fair rent. Had he attained that object? It was a notorious fact that he had not. It was the practice of the Courts when fixing a fair rent to hold that all improvements made on the holdings previous to 20 years before the date of the originating notice were the property of the landlord, and should be taken into account on behalf of the landlord when fixing the fair rent. Let him illustrate his meaning. On the passing of the Land Act of 1881 a tenant gave notice to have a fair rent fixed. In evidence in the case it was proved that considerable improvements were effected subsequent to 1861, 20 years previous to the passing of the Act. When the case was being heard in Court the tenant got the benefit of those improvements, or, at least, was supposed to get the benefit of them in the fixing of his rent. Let them take the case of the holding of a farmer immediately alongside this man, but whose improvements were made previous to the year 1861, whose improvements had been completed in the year 1860. What was the procedure of the Court in this case? It was the second case that the Court had no objection in the matter under the decision of the case "Adams *v.* Dunseath," in which it was held that those improvements, although made by the tenant, were the property of the landlord, and should be taken into consideration in the fixing of a fair rent. That practice was known all over Ireland, North and South, as the confiscation of the tenants' improvements, and the present Bill was intended to do away with that gross injustice to the tenant farmers of Ireland. The Bill provided that 20 years' quiet enjoyment was not to be held by the Court as compensation for improvements. Improvements were defined as anything which increased the letting value of a holding, and they claimed that whatever increased value was given to the holding by the labour of the tenant or by his predecessors in title either in drainage, reclamation, manure, or otherwise, should be held to be the property of the tenant, and that no rent was to be fixed upon them. The Bill also provided for the presumption that the improvements were made by the tenant. No doubt he would be asked why he presumed anything at all of the kind. His answer would be obvious to any man well acquainted with the conditions of the Irish tenant-farmer. It was a notorious fact, and it would not be denied in the House, that in nine cases out of every ten that had come before the Land Courts it had been proved that the tenant had made the whole of the improvements. There was another reason which put the case on equitable grounds, and that was that the improvements ought to be held to be the property of the tenant, unless the contrary was proved. The tenant-farmers, as a rule, did not keep a very accurate account of the expenditure on their holdings, whereas, on the other hand, a very careful account was kept in the estate office of the landlord of any expenditure made by the landlord, and was easily able to make a case in Court in the matter of his expenditure on the holding. Again, this Bill was designed to give effect to the intentions of Parliament when they passed the Land Act of 1881, and other subsequent Acts, for the relief of the Irish tenant-farmer. One of the first things the Bill did was to shorten the statutory term and make it practically one-half of the existing term for which judicial rents were fixed, and he might be asked why did he make such a provision? It had been found that no man could tell in the present condition of foreign competition what land would be worth in any part of the United Kingdom in 15 years to come. The friends of the tenants of Ireland in 1879 and 1880 were telling them from public platforms that foreign competition would ultimately lower the agricultural value of land so much in Ireland that 15 years was too long a term for the judicial rent to run. They found that since 1881 the value of land produce had been going down steadily. Any man, in 1879 or 1880, who was a practical farmer, and who would have said publicly that in 1894 the best home-grown beef and mutton would not produce 6d. per lb., would have been laughed at. Was any man in the House able to say that in 15 years' time beef, mutton, and other land produce would not be considerably lower than it was at present. Up to the present practically they had only to deal with competition from America; competition from Australia and from South America had not yet been developed. In the London markets, he was sorry to say, Australian butter was successfully competing against Irish produce. They found that New Zealand and South American mutton had practically destroyed that industry in Ireland and in Great Britain. In face of these facts they asked that the judicial term should be shortened to eight years. The Bill went on to deal with the question of town parks. Late decisions in the Land Courts in Ireland made it imperative upon any Member introducing a Bill of this kind to take notice of that important matter. He found, in looking back to the Debate in that House on the Land Act of 1887, that his hon. Friend the Member for Galway City (Mr. Pinkerton) proposed an Amendment that this question of town parks should not apply to the land in the neighbourhood of any town unless the town was over 10,000 population. During the course of the Debate that figure was changed to 5,000, and it was held, if he remembered accurately, by some hon. Members opposite, that this was a question of great importance to the people of Ulster, and that they did not see why because a farmer occupied a holding in the immediate neighbourhood of a town that that should prevent him from having a fair rent fixed. The then Chief Secretary for Ireland, the present Leader of the Opposition, accepted an Amendment which provided that this question should not apply to land in the neighbourhood of any town unless the town was over 2,000 population. That was carried by a majority of 53, but unfortunately, like a great deal of other Irish legislation that passed through the House of Commons, the Land Act of 1889 had to go through the ordeal of another place—the House of Lords, who, no doubt exercising their undoubted right, and following their ancient usage with regard to Irish affairs—a usage continued in the present Session—they rejected this Amendment altogether, with the unfortunate result that they found the Land Courts in Ireland at the present moment holding that land in the immediate neighbourhood, say, of a cross road where there was a smith's forge and half-a-dozen Irish mud cabins—that for this reason if that smith desired to have a piece of land that the value of it was thereby increased. This Bill did not say that land in the neighbourhood of a town or of a city should not bear any greater value than land situated in rural districts. That question was left altogether to the decision of the Courts—to the discretion of practical men acting as Sub-Commissioners. The next matter dealt with by the Bill was the question of pasture holdings, and in that respect the Bill provided that no holding should be held by the Land Commission to be a pasture holding unless it was held under a lease or other written instrument which expressly provided that the holding was to be so used. He was personally acquainted with a good many cases in Ireland where the tenant had been debarred from getting a fair rent fixed, because the Court held that the original intent of the holding was that the farm should be used wholly or mainly for the purpose of pasture. These holdings were held largely under leases made previous to the Act of 1887—leases in many cases granted after the Act of 1870, and which, unfortunately for the interest of the Irish tenant-farmers and the interests of social peace in Ireland, retained many of the worst provisions of the notorious Leinster leases. It was to the credit of the late Duke of Leinster that after the Land Act of 1881 he voluntarily broke every lease on his estate, allowed every one of his tenants to go into the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed, and did as much as lay in the power of one man to do to let the tenants on his estate get the full benefit of the Act of 1881. But such was not done by the other landlords of Ireland, who kept to the provisions of the Leinster leases, in many of which there was a proviso that only a small percentage of the holding could be used for agricultural purposes. He had seen many leases where a map of the holding was attached, 90 per cent. of the area of the farm being coloured red, and it was provided if any of that area so marked was broken up the tenant subjected himself to a fine of £10 per acre. Since the passing of the Land Act of 1887, which enabled leaseholders to go into Court, the Court had held that the men occupying holdings under such leases were debarred from having a fair rent fixed, on the ground that the original intent of the letting was that the farm should be used mainly or wholly for the purpose of pasture. It might be asked, why did the farmer accept a lease with such provisions in it? He knew a tenant-farmer who was offered a lease by his landlord in the year 1871, in which there was a provision prohibiting him from tilling more than 20 acres out of a farm of 250 acres. He refused to accept the conditions, and after a long correspondence and a great deal of worry and disappointment between the tenant and the agent, the tenant eventually signed the lease, with even more stringent provisions than it contained originally, because he was informed that if he did not do so the landlord would feel compelled to resume possession of the holding. That proved that the Irish tenant-farmers, in the acceptance of leases with penal clauses, were not free agents. The Bill also dealt with the question of sub-letting. Numerous cases had been turned out of Court because it was held that the tenant, having sub-let, was debarred from having a fair rent fixed. He received a letter a few days ago from a tenant-farmer in the County of Tipperary who rented a farm of 186 Irish acres, 16 of which were sub-let to four tenants, and were so sub-let when he entered into possession of the farm. His rent was £130 a year, which, he said, was considerably more than the fair rent which had been estimated by several valuers. This tenant went into the Land Court, but he was excluded from the benefits of the Land Act on this question of sub-letting. The Bill provided that in such cases the Court would not be permitted to hold that there was sub-letting unless one-fourth of the holding was sub-let. It also provided that no matter what area of a farm was sub-let, if the landlord was a consenting party to the sub-letting the tenant should not be debarred from having a fair rent fixed. A provision in the Act of 1881 provided that a farmer could sub-let half an acre in connection with cottages for labourers on the holding. Within the last couple of years the Irish Members had succeeded in carrying an Amendment to the Labourers Act which now permitted Boards of Guardians to annex an acre of land for labourers' cottages. It appeared rather absurd that while, by legislation passed in that House, it was permissible for a Board of Guardians to purchase an acre of land to be attached to a labourer's cottage, the Courts should hold that it would be sub-letting on the part of the tenant-farmer to annex an acre of land for that purpose. It must be clear that, in this connection at least, the Land Act certainly required amendment. The Bill proposed to repeal the 7th section of the Act of 1887, which was generally known as the "eviction-made-easy clause." He said that in the interests of peace, social order, and good government in Ireland, nothing more detrimental could be done than to facilitate the action of evicting landlords. On the principle of dual ownership they had acknowledged that the tenant-farmer possessed a very considerable interest in his holding. He remembered hearing the present Judge Madden, at the time he was Attorney General to the Conservative Government, declare from the Treasury Bench, during the passing of the Land Purchase Act of 1891, that the interest of the tenant-farmer in Ireland was as great, if not greater, than the interest of the landlord. He presumed there were many hon. Members who would be very indignant indeed if they heard any man say that the interest of the landlords of Ireland was not equal to 16 or 17 years' purchase of the rent. No man could safely say at the present moment what was the fair amount to give for the purchase of a farm, considering that the purchaser would have to pay annual instalments, and 4 per cent. for the next 49 years. The law as it at present existed enabled one of the partners in this concern of dual ownership to realise the whole of the property, because one of the partners happened to owe a certain amount of money equal to about 1-16th or 1-17th of the interest he had in the whole concern. He wanted to know why the sleeping partner should be afforded extreme facilities, as against the working man in the firm, to acquire the whole of the property because of the non-payment of a year's rent? It was undeniably unjust that it should be in the power of one of the partners in the concern to take possession of the whole value of the dual property because of the non-fulfilment of one of the conditions. If they were to look to the equity of this case the landlord should be compelled by law, before he could resume the sole possession of the holding, to pay the tenant whatever the value of his ownership in the going concern was, minus whatever rent was due. It was because such was not the case at present that he proposed to repeal the 7th section of the Land Act of 1887. The second portion of the Bill dealt with the Land Purchase Act of the year 1891. He did not think there was any man who had the interest of the Irish tenant-farmers sincerely at heart who did not desire that purchase on a large scale and on an equitable basis should be largely carried out, and he had no objection whatever to the tenants purchasing their holdings provided that they only paid for that portion of the property which was the landlords and should not be compelled to pay for anything that already belonged to themselves. The Leader of the Opposition, when he was Chief Secretary, was over and over again told by the Irish Members, when the Land Purchase Bill of 1891 was before the House, that if he insisted on some of its provisions the Bill would be inoperative. He was told, for instance, that this question of the tenants' insurance fund would retard and prevent the working of the Act of 1891. And what had occurred? It had been found that under this provision it was impossible for the tenant-farmer of Ireland, for the first five years, no matter at what rate of purchase he might acquire his holding, to reap a greater reduction in his rent or instalments than 20 per cent., at the same time that he deprived himself of the benefit which he formerly possessed of the landlords' contribution towards the local rates, thus reducing his benefit very much under 20 per cent. The Bill, therefore, proposed to repeal this portion of the Land Act of 1891 which dealt with the purchasers' insurance fund. That was done just as much in the interest of the landlords as in that of the tenant-farmers. Those who were acquainted with the condition of the farmers knew that owing to the continued depression in the price of agricultural produce the tenant-farmers of Ireland required immediate relief, and if they did not get immediate relief in the shape of a large reduction of rent he feared that within the next few years they would find a general state of bankruptcy among the Irish tenant-farmers. They found that many landlords who were desirous of selling some of their property had been largely prevented from doing so by the extraordinary and totally unnecessary provisions of the Bill of 1891. It was a notorious fact that there was only one buyer for land in Ireland—namely, the tenant-farmer who was in occupation—and if the labours of the Irish Nationalists for the last 14 years had resulted in nothing else but in producing this state of things he said they would have been largely compensated for everything that they had done both in and out of this House in the interests of the Irish tenant. Looking at the Return as to the amount of money that had been applied for and issued under the Land Purchase Act of 1891 up to the end of November, 1893, he found that a very small sum indeed out of the £30,000,000 had been issued. He believed the smallness of this amount was largely due to the fact that the tenant-farmers, under this insurance fund, were debarred for the first five years from getting the full benefit that should naturally accrue to them from the bargain they had made with their landlord, and which every purchaser under the Ashbourne Act was in the enjoyment of immediately he made his purchase. They desired in this particular that both the landlord and tenant-farmers of Ireland should be put in the same position as both landlord and tenant occupied under the Ashbourne Act, and they proposed in the 19th section that the Exchequer contributions should go towards the provision of labourers' cottages. Why was this Exchequer contribution introduced into the Land Act of 1891? When this large sum of money was granted by the House of Commons for land purchase it was supposed that every tenant-farmer in Ireland would be breaking his neck to get possession of the land and that the landlords would be anxious to get possession of the cash. But nothing of the kind had occurred. Only about £600,000 had been issued, and therefore there was no necessity whatever for the Imperial contribution to make up any deficiency. But as the money was already applied for that purpose, and as it was not wanted for that purpose, and as it was intended to go towards the benefit of Ireland, they proposed that three-fourths of it should be applied immediately towards the erection of labourers' dwellings. It would be admitted by all those who were acquainted with the conditions of the labouring population in Ireland, who knew the great benefits that had resulted from the working of the Labourers' Act—the social elevation of the people, the beneficent change in their habits in consequence of their being provided with decent dwellings instead of a mud cabin—that the money could not be applied to a better purpose. The Bill also proposed to do something for the landlords under the Land Purchase Acts. They did not think that the landlords should be mulcted in such heavy costs in connection with proof of title. Speaking for himself, he thought that the holding of 20 or 30 years' undisputed possession of an estate ought to be held to be sufficient proof that the holder was entitled to the possession of it. Having thus briefly explained the provisions of the Act as far as he could, he would ask the House to consent to have the Bill read a second time. The Government themselves saw that the working of the Land Acts in Ireland was not satisfactory, and that acknowledgment being recognised on all hands it was the most natural thing in the world that the Representatives of the tenant-farmers of Ireland in that House should be the people to come forward with a scheme to remedy these defects. He believed that the whole of the tenant-farmers of Ireland were impressed with the necessity of its provisions being passed into law. He would ask those gentlemen who sat opposite, who were very anxious that the Irish Land Question should be settled, who were very anxious that peace and order and good government should prevail in Ireland, to prove by their votes that their declarations were not from the lips only, but were the result of deep and sincere conviction. He appealed with confidence to the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and the hon. Gentlemen who sat with him, who represented rural constituencies in the North of Ireland. The hon. Member knew as well as anybody that the Ulster farmers were anxious to have large changes made in the administration of the Land Acts. He had no doubt from the indications which the hon. Member had given since the House sat that he approved of many, if not all, of the propositions of the Bill. Knowing, therefore, that this Bill would have the support of all the various sections of the House who represented tenant-farmers in Ireland, he appealed with confidence to gentlemen on both sides of the House to support the Bill, and to give the Land Acts for Ireland a decent chance of settling the Irish Land Question.

*MR. PINKERTON (Galway), in seconding the Motion, said he appeared in the unusual position of an advocate of the cause of the Irish landlords. He wished to impress upon them the necessity of acting in a more enlightened way in regard to all Irish measures calculated to benefit the Irish people. It was an undoubted fact that if the Irish landlords had met it in a better spirit, the Act of 1881 would have staved off the Land Question for another 50 years at least. The shortcomings of the Act of 1881 were largely due to the opposition of the Irish landlords, and as a consequence the Government were forced to introduce a further remedial measure in 1887. He thought common-sense should teach the Irish landlords the necessity for a measure simplifying the working of the Land Acts and preventing undue litigation. They had nothing to gain by putting off this question. The present measure, as his hon. Friend had said, was noncontentious, inasmuch as there was not a single principle put forward in it that was not approved by every Member who sat for a rural constituency. It was an undoubted fact that Ireland, from a financial point of view, was as long away from the English markets as if they were in America, but the hon. Member for Huntingdonshire was good enough to state that the Irish tenants were better rentpayers than the tenants in Huntingdonshire. The hon. Member ascribed that to the fact that his Huntingdonshire tenants occupied very heavy land. The Huntingdonshire tenants were not the only men who had got heavy land. In Ireland men went up the hillsides reclaiming the land, unfortunately with the landlords hanging on to their coat-tails;

and, as they reclaimed, the rent increased, and the holdings were rackrented by the landlords in face of enactments passed by Parliament. Let any man go to the division represented by the hon. Member for South Down, and he would see evidences of improvements on every hand greater than could be pointed to in any district in England, and it could easily be ascertained that in these districts the landlords, taking advantage of certain legal technicalities, had prevented the tenants who had made these improvements from going into the Land Court and having a fair rent fixed. Yet despite the fact that they had grasped all the improvements of their tenants, Irish landlords were going about England at every election like sandwichmen carrying boards bearing the legend, "Pity the poor landlords of Ireland!" Yet it was an undoubted fact that English landlords had voluntarily and without any compulsion given reductions to their tenants which at the present moment amounted to more than the total rental of Ireland. The case was different as between the English and the Irish tenant-farmer. The English farmer was not confined to any particular industry. If one door was shut another was open, but the Irish tenant-farmer was bound neck and heel; and his opinion was that any Irish landlord who took advantage of a legal technicality was a man who thereby declared himself to be a man who was not ashamed to benefit himself from the labours of his tenants, or, in other words, pose as one who was not against picking his neighbour's pocket. He could only express his regret that the hon. and gallant Member for North Down, who was certainly one of the best landlords in Ireland, should oppose this Bill. The hon. and gallant Member objected to the Bill on the ground that it threw the onus of proving that they had effected the improvements on a holding upon the landlords. But by placing that onus upon the illiterate tenants the latter had been robbed of thousands of pounds. The tenants kept no records of the sums they expended upon the holdings, whereas the landlords kept books which showed every penny that was expended by the landlords in effecting improvements, and probably they showed thousands that had never been expended for that purpose at all. In his opinion, there was no injustice in throwing the burden of proof upon the educated landlord instead of upon the uneducated tenant. During the able and exhaustive statement of his hon. Friend he noticed that the English agricultural Representatives were absent—those Representatives who were so anxious to have a night set apart for a discussion on agricultural depression. It seemed strange that those high priests of Protection, who believed that, by sprinkling the portals of the nation with the blood of foreign cattle, they could turn aside the angel of destruction, were not there that day to give proof of the faith that was in them. Here they would have an opportunity of discussing agricultural depression in Ireland, and here was an opportunity of trying an experiment in a fair and just way—an experiment that these Members were afraid must in the near future be tried in England. He remembered very well the discussion that took place on the question of town parks in the House of Commons, which had been referred to by his hon. Friend, and he remembered that an Amendment accepted by the then Chief Secretary was afterwards rejected in the House of Lords. Indeed, the Bill was itself rejected on the Motion of Lord Macnaghten, although it would have conferred many benefits on tenants in many parts of the North of Ireland. But his Lordship took this step simply because it excluded towns like Bushmills, Downpatrick, Portrush, and others. He would make an appeal to the hon. Member for South Tyrone on this matter. That hon. Member could not admire the methods of some of his friends——

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I should like to speak for myself.

*Mr. PINKERTON said, that with all respect for the hon. Member, he would point out that he had spoken in many different tones of voice on this question. He would assert that there was not one Member for any part of the North of Ireland at present who could venture to address his constituents and go against the principles embodied in this Bill. At the present moment they had an object-lesson in North Derry. They had the Attorney General of the Tory Government coming forward as the friend of the distressed tenant, an ardent and impassioned advocate of compulsory sale, and they had another distinguished gentleman, Mr. Harrison, following suit. They had these two gentlemen going through the length and breadth of the country asking the support of the people not on their own merits, but owing to the fact that they were in favour of compulsory sale. Everything pointed to the fact that the eyes of Members representing, or seeking to represent, northern constituencies were being gradually opened to the necessities of the situation. For his own part, he was in favour of the Bill as it stood; but if it had any defects, they could be easily removed in Committee. As he had no desire to talk the Bill out, he should content himself by seconding the Motion of his hon. Friend that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Kilbride.*)

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) rose to move, as an Amendment—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, legislation affecting the Law of Land Tenure in Ireland is inexpedient and unfair to the interests of all persons concerned pending the inquiry proposed by the Chief Secretary into the working of the Irish Land Acts."

He said, that he should shortly state his reasons for moving his Amendment. He took comparatively little objection to the speeches of the hon. Members who had moved and seconded the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill, because no doubt from their standpoint the provisions of the measure were fair and legitimate. It appeared to him, however, that to read this Bill a second time pending the Report of the Commission which the Government had appointed to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Acts would involve the Government in a dilemma. He could assure the hon. Member who had paid him the compliment of describing him as being one of the best landlords in Ireland that he in no sense opposed the principle of this measure; he merely wished that legislation on the subject should be postponed until the Commission had reported upon the working of the Irish Land Acts. It appeared to him to be like the process of hanging a man first and trying him afterwards. His hon. Friend the Member for Galway, who seconded the Motion, had said he was the advocate of the Irish landlords. They had all heard of the Devil's Advocate; but if his right hon. Friend were the landlords' advocate, all he would say was, "Save us from our friends." As he had said, he was not opposed to the Bill, but he thought the matters contained in it required consideration. The question was one which the Government considered still to require investigation. He had no sympathy with landlords who appealed to legal technicalities to evade the land clauses—who would raise a question, for instance, as to how many roods or perches had been sub-let on a farm—but he thought there were points requiring to be more carefully considered before they were brought forward to be dealt with in a Bill like this. A good deal was heard about fair rent, and about a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, but they did not hear so much about fair-play all round. It was for fair-play all round that he pleaded. They knew pretty well what a fair day's wage for a fair day's work meant. It meant "considerably more than I am getting at present." To come to "fair rent," they knew pretty well what that meant too. It generally meant "not more than half, and probably about a quarter, of what I am now paying." The Irish landlords in demanding fair-play asked for a proper *locus standi*, and wished to be informed where the tenants' improvements, for which compensation was to be asked, were to date from. Were they to date from the period of the subsidence of the Flood? On this point they were left without the slightest guide as to the claims they were to meet, or as to what evidence was to be accepted with regard to these claims. If it was to be a question of prairie value, when was the land prairie land? If they asked him for prairie value, his reply was, "Give me back my prairie land—put it into the state it was in before it was 'improved' by Irish farming?" All he could say was that it would eat up a great deal of the tenants' improvement capital if they were required to replace the land in the reproductive condition it was in before the plough was first put into it. He happened to have some knowledge of cases where that had taken place—cases of land which had been left neglected from time immemorial to the present day, and from which, when broken up, 10 or 12 successive crops were taken. If all the improvements dating from the time of the Flood onwards were to be held the property of the tenant, surely the tenant ought to recompense the landlord for the "disimprovement," so to speak, which had occurred in the same period. It might be said that if the landlords could prove that the farming had been wasteful, they could bring the fact forward in the Land Court as a reason why there should be consideration given. But what was the use of that power? Where was the compensation to be got from? They could get nothing from a cat but its skin, and certainly nothing from a bankrupt tenant in the shape of compensation. He would not go into the details of the Bill, because it was not within the scope of his Amendment to deal with them. He thought that if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary could see his way to postponing the consideration of the Bill until the House had dealt with the question of the inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman proposed, and which he (Colonel Waring) did not in the least object to, they would know where they stood. He could not imagine a better reason for the bringing forward of the Bill than that the Mover and Seconder of it, and those who were acting with them, were afraid of the result of the inquiry. He (Colonel Waring) and his friends were not afraid of it.

An hon. MEMBER: Who blocked it?

COLONEL WARING said, he had not done so. Let those who were afraid of the inquiry block it. The Bill if passed would remove the whole ground for the inquiry. He and his friends believed that they would come out of the inquiry with flying colours, and he therefore would conclude by moving his Amendment.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) said, he begged to second the Motion of his hon. and gallant Friend, and, at the outset, he would congratulate the hon. Member who had moved the Second Reading upon the very businesslike way in which he had addressed himself to the subject. While he (Mr. Kenny) seconded the Motion of his hon. and gallant Friend, he might say that there were several proposals in the Bill which would, subject to certain restrictions and conditions, have his entire sympathy. All that those in favour of the Amendment said was that, having regard to the fact that the Chief Secretary proposed that there should be an inquiry into the working of the Acts, it was unfair and inexpedient in the interests of both landlord and tenant that the House should now affirm not alone one principle, but the 20 principles which were contained in the Bill. What was the position in which they stood? The terms of the Motion of the Chief Secretary as it now stood on the Paper were these—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the principles and practices of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881. and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in law or practice as they may deem to be desirable."

The Chief Secretary, he was bound to admit, had shown a most conciliatory spirit in settling the terms of the Reference. The inquiry, in the first instance, was to have had a more extended character to meet the objections of hon. Gentlemen both on the Ministerial and the Opposition side of the House. He regretted that early that morning that Amendment had not been accepted. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Brodrick) had opposed it under peculiar circumstances, holding that the Leader of the Opposition—who was not present—ought to be consulted with reference to proposed Amendments.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Leader of the Opposition suggested the course proposed.

MR. W. KENNY said, he was aware of that, but the Leader of the Opposition was not in his place at a quarter past 12 that morning, and the hon. Member for Guildford asked that the Motion might be postponed for 48 hours in order that the right hon. Gentleman might be consulted. He hoped that to-morrow all opposition to it would be withdrawn. There was hardly a section of the Bill the subject-matter of which would not come before the Select Committee proposed by the Chief Secretary.

MR. SEXTON: No, no.

Mr. W. KENNY: All questions but the Purchase Clauses would come before the Committee.

Mr. SEXTON: And the statutory term.

Mr. W. KENNY said, he did not know that the statutory term would not come before the Committee—he rather thought it would, as the Committee would have power

> "to suggest such improvements in law or practice as they might deem to be desirable."

If the terms of the Chief Secretary's Motion were accepted the discussion on this Bill would be useless and futile. It was said that the principle of the Bill should be accepted and that the House could deal with the details as it thought fit in Committee. Well, he could understand such advice if they were dealing with one great principle. If the Second Reading were passed to-day the House would be affirming not one general principle, but about 15 or 16 different principles, which were all embodied in the Bill before the House. He submitted that the acceptance of the Bill drawn as it was would lead to considerable friction. He was sure it could not be the intention of either the Mover or Seconder that the Second Reading of the Bill should be taken in any sense as a guide to the Members who were to form the Select Committee. If it was not to act in that way—and he did not think such a thing would be suggested for a moment—what was the use of discussing these various matters when every one of them, except the Purchase Clauses, would have to come before the Committee eventually? The hon. Member for South Kerry, who moved the Second Reading, probably found that time did not enable him to go through all the clauses of the Bill. He had omitted to mention four or five very important clauses. He did not refer to the question of demesne lands, nor to the creation of judicial tenancies by limited owners, nor to leases by Judges of the High Court in Ireland, nor to evictions by the head landlord where there was a sub-tenant in possession, nor to the landlord's right of pre-emption, nor to the question of future tenancies. But when the hon. Member came to refer to one of the suggestions of his Bill—namely, the repeal of what he called the eviction-made-easy clause, he put it on a ground which could not be evolved from the section. The section was to repeal the clause of the Act of 1887, and the hon. Member submitted to the House an argument based on an observation of Mr. Justice Madden, formerly Attorney General for Ireland, to the effect that the tenant had as large, if not a larger, interest in the holding than his landlord. The hon. Member argued on that that on eviction the tenant ought to receive the amount of the value of his interest in the holding. But how did that question arise under the Bill now before the House? The only question with reference to eviction-made-easy was that the section of the Act of 1887 was to be repealed, and the only effect of that would be to leave the law as it was before 1887, and so it would fail to accomplish the object the hon. Member had in view. The hon. Gentleman said he moved the Second Reading in the interests of social peace and order in Ireland. There was no one on either side who would not like to promote the cause of order and good feeling in Ireland; but the method proposed by the hon. Gentleman was a futile method. The inquiry proposed by the Chief Secretary was the method most likely to lead to peace and order on the other side of the Channel, and therefore he seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

> "In the opinion of this House legislation affecting the Law of Land Tenure in Ireland is inexpedient and unfair to the interests of all persons concerned pending the inquiry proposed by the Chief Secretary into the working of the Irish Land Acts."—(*Colonel Waring.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, the hon. Member for South Kerry, in the course of what he must call a very plain, businesslike statement, had made an appeal to himself (Mr. T. W. Russell). The hon. Member for Galway had also made an appeal, and had charged him in a light, airy, way—though not in an illnatured manner—with inconsistency on the Land Question. Well, he must point out that he was not the only person who had some difficulty in this matter, because whilst he had been forced into views on compulsory sale which he did not originally entertain he remembered that in 1888, when it was proposed to renew the Ashbourne Act—which everyone acknowledged to be the best Land Purchase Act ever passed—every Member of the Party below the Gangway opposite walked into the Lobby against it. Inasmuch as the hon. Member opposite had accused him of inconsistency he should like to remind the hon. Member that those who lived in glass houses should not throw stones. He, however, did not wish that these retorts should at all influence the Debate to-night. As this was probably the most serious day for Ireland they should have this Session he wished to see personal matters thrown aside and the issue faced on its merits. He found himself in a position of some difficulty. The facts were these:—For the past 14 or 15 years that House had been engaged in passing Land Acts, which had conferred an immense benefit upon Ireland, but undoubtedly great legal difficulties had arisen on the construction of these Acts. When he found that the statutory term fixed in 1881 would expire in 1896 he came to the conclusion that there should be an inquiry into the working of the rent-fixing clauses and the effect of judicial decisions, and how far these had contravened the manifest intention of Parliament in passing the Land Acts. The Chief Secretary frankly accepted that proposal, and he had done his best since the Session opened to give effect to it in the House. The right hon. Gentleman had put down the Motion on one of the first days of the Session. Amendments were put on the Paper by the Member for South Hunts, Cambridge, and Mid Armagh. That by the Member for Mid Armagh had disappeared, but it had been re-inserted on the Amendment Paper by an English Member. The Leader of the Opposition suggested an amended Reference, and the Chief Secretary assented to it. Yet what did they find? The hon. Member for the Guildford Division, who was not a mere private Member, but who sat on the Front Opposition Bench with the Leader of the Opposition, immediately put a block on the amended form of Reference, and proposed to insert words which would not serve him one bit. What would it matter if he proved to demonstration that the Irish landlords during the last 15 years had lost 25 per cent. of their rent, or that encumbrancers found it more difficult to get interest on their money? That would not prove the Irish tenants had got any advantage. It would show that, owing to increase in the cost of labour and depreciation of agriculture, the landlords had suffered loss, but not that the tenants had got advantage. The Amendment, and the way in which the hon. Member had treated the Resolution, must be taken as a deliberate attempt to obstruct the meeting of the Committee; and that being the case, his own course in the matter became clearer than otherwise it would have been. It was quite true that to a large extent the Second Reading prejudged the issues that would go to the Committee. He was sure the Chief Secretary felt that as much as he did. But how was he (Mr. Russell) placed? He represented an agricultural constituency deeply and profoundly interested in this question. But would he be justified in taking his chance that the opposition to the Committee, which had been persisted in up to the very eve of the Second Reading of the Bill, would be withdrawn, and thus lose the only opportunity he was likely to have of stating his views on the whole question? He would not be justified in doing so, and, therefore, though he would much prefer to have the question sifted by a Committee, and to be guided by the opinion of experts in the matter, he must act upon the knowledge he possessed and vote for the Second Reading of the Bill. He would say frankly, however, it must not be assumed that he approved of every clause or proposal which the measure contained. He agreed that it was a large order, in view of the state of agriculture, not only in Ireland, but throughout the world, to say that the Irish Courts should in 1896 refix judicial rents for a period of 15 years, and he was not prepared to say that the period stated in the Bill was the best. Whether it should be 15 years or 10 was, however, a mere question of detail. The real kernel of the Bill was contained in the 5th and 6th clauses with regard to improvements made by tenants. He thought the House must agree that action was required in regard to the decisions of the Court of Appeal as to tenants' improvements. Even if the Judges were right in their construction of the Act, a mistake had been made, and Parliament ought to rectify it. He thought the Judges had failed to recognise that these Land Acts embodied a great policy, and had too often taken a technical view of questions that ought to have been treated from a wider standpoint. He would give one instance which had occurred in the case of a friend of his. It was the case of the Rev. Mr. Mares, a Presbyterian minister in County Antrim. He was not a Campaigner or anything of that kind, and wished to defraud nobody, and he was in a different position from other tenants who had taken steps that he was not prepared to take. He took a farm of 18 acres under a fee-farm grant, his rent being £18. The land was practically waste when he took it, and at his own expense he reclaimed 11 acres of it. In addition, he built a manse at a cost of £400. After the passing of the Rent Redemption Act of 1891 he went into Court to have his rent revised. The Sub-Commissioners reduced the rent to £11, holding that under the Act they were not entitled to fix any rent upon the manse, or in respect of the capital expended on reclamation. Well, that stood to common-sense. But the landlord, Mr. Letty, appealed to the Land Commission Court, and Judges Bewley and FitzGerald went down and tried the case. They deliberately decided that the Sub-Commissioners ought to have taken into account the expenditure upon the manse and upon reclamation, and fixed the rent at the original amount of £18. That case had occurred within the last few months. Similar cases were occurring every day in Ireland—he would mention two which had occurred in County Meath, "Mullen *v.* Dogherty" and "Mullen *v.* Kearns." Those cases were types of what was going on every day of the week in the Province of Ulster, and in these circumstances Parliament could not refuse to pass an amending Bill for the relief of the people, and in order to carry out its own intentions. He might be asked how he knew what the intentions of Parliament were. He conducted the negotiations with the Government with regard to the Rent Redemption Act, and knew that it was their intention to treat fee-farm grants in the same way as leaseholds were treated. In regard to tenants' improvements, he understood the decision of the Court to be that, while the tenant ought to get compensation for his actual expenditure, the inherent properties in the soil were to belong to the landlord. But this was a co-partnership, and surely nobody would dispute that the direct expenditure by the tenant ought, at all events, to be taken into account in fixing his rent. But on what ground was the other partner to get the whole of the inherent properties in the soil? He was not prepared to say that the landlord ought not to have his share of these properties, but he objected to his having them all. This was a matter in which a Select Committee would have been invaluable in arriving at the relative claims of the two parties. Then as to the presumption being in favour of the tenant. He saw no objection to the presumption in the matter of improvements being in favour of the tenant, because it would be less difficult for the landlord to prove from his books any expenditure he had made upon a holding. The landlord had an office and kept accounts, and every one familiar with the working of the Land Courts knew that, wherever a landlord had expended money, it could be proved in open Court. But the very opposite was the case with the tenants. Very few Irish farmers kept books, but the landlords had no right to take credit for the tenants' improvements on that account. The question of town parks was one of difficulty, but it ought not to be incapable of solution. If a man, even though he lived in a town, actually farmed agricultural land contiguous to that town, there was no reason why that land should be regarded as town park; but, on the other hand, if a shopkeeper in the town had a field as accommodation land, there was a great deal to be said in favour of applying the town park system in that case. With regard to large grazing farms and pasture lands, he thought some changes ought to be made in dealing with them. He was not in favour of the large grazier living in Dublin having a fair rent fixed on being made a dual owner of the land on which he had never set foot, but in the case of partly agricultural and partly pastoral land on which a man lived there was no reason why that man should not have a fair rent fixed in the ordinary way. Nothing could be more preposterous than to talk about the intention of Parliament in the way they had heard. What could have been clearer than the intention of Parliament in 1870, when the Commissioners went down and deliberately excluded the town of Dundrum by the most perverse ingenuity? The ninth clause of the Bill, relating to demesne lands, was, in his opinion, much too sweeping, though he admitted that difficulties were involved in the matter. In respect to sub-letting, it must be borne in mind that the original intention of Parliament in placing difficulties in the way of it was to cope with the pressure of population in Ireland. That pressure, however, no longer existed. The whole reason for legislating against it had passed away, and consequently there was no longer the same objection to sub-letting. There, again, upon the question of consideration the Judges had narrowed the application of the principle as much as they could. He would mention the case of Scotch mills. Labourers were necessary in the mills, and houses must be built for them to live in. The farmers put up cottages in the immediate vicinity, and the moment they did that they were out of court and could not appeal. Would any reasonable man defend those things? It was because he had looked into the matter and saw the difficulties attending it that he was so anxious a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire and guide the House to a fair and righteous decision between the parties. Purchase was a considerable way off, but revision of rents was near at hand, and for that reason, and in order to remedy the injustices that existed, he was in favour of the appointment of a Committee. But the Committee could not be obtained, and in the circumstances he was bound to take the Bill and make the best of it. He would not, however, tie himself down to supporting everything in the Bill, but he was bound to recognise that it dealt with matters that ought in justice to be inquired into. Then as to the insurance clauses, he held that inasmuch as the Irish tenant-farmers were getting advantages and the British taxpayer was running enormous risks, the Irish farmer should be called upon, in working out his own redemption, to provide an insurance fund. He had his own views with regard to the progress made under the Act of 1891. Everybody knew that for the last two years the Home Rule controversy had stopped everything, but still it was a fact of enormous importance that £2,000,000 sterling should have been applied for under the Act. The Irish landlords, at all events, could not say that he had ever been an advocate of confiscation. They knew that he had run some risks, as a Representative of the tenant-farmers, in defending them. But he must tell the landlords that if it was proved, as he believed it could be proved, that under the sanction of the law and under the decision of the Courts—mistaken decisions, in his opinion—they had been enabled to appropriate the tenants' expenditure on their holdings and to exact rent on that expenditure, he should be as anxious to prevent them continuing that course as he had ever been to stop the tenants from doing what was wrong. He should therefore vote for the Second Reading of the Bill, as his hon. Friend the Member for South Derry would have done had he not paired.

*Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, the speeches made both for and against the Bill that afternoon had been of a very remarkable character, but the opponents of the Bill had mainly dealt with the circumstances under which it was introduced, and he wished, with the indulgence of the House, to state why he disapproved of the time, manner, and occasion in which this Bill was introduced, but also why he thought the Bill should not be accepted by the House. His hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone had given an accurate history of what had occurred with regard to the appointment of a Committee on this subject, but he did not go far enough. His hon. Friend said that up to Thursday last an arrangement had been practically arrived at that if the Chief Secretary would withdraw a large portion of the wide Reference those on the Opposition side of the House would put no bar in the way of the appointment of the Committee. But his hon. Friend entirely omitted to say that this Bill, which was one of the largest Bills connected with Irish land that had ever been presented to the House, which meant a virtual reconstruction of all the principles on which Land Acts had been hitherto framed, was only put before the House on Monday evening, and that they had only had 36 hours in which to consider its provisions. Since 1880 a Land Act had been proposed nearly every year, and in no single case had there been so strong a proposal made as that which the House was now asked to adopt without having having had time, almost, to read the Bill. Hon. Members below the Gangway seemed to think that other hon. Members were to decide this question without consulting their friends in Ireland. There had been no opportunity of sending a single copy of the Bill to Ireland, and if it had not been that he did not wish to take a course obnoxious to the House, he would have risen immediately after the Mover and Seconder of the Second Reading to move the adjournment of the Debate. Thus this proposal was sprung upon them after the Reference to the Committee had been canvassed on the two sides of the House. He did not, of course, impute to his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary any collusion in the matter; but at the same time, his right hon. Friend would recollect that his amended Reference only appeared on the Paper on Tuesday morning, and that the House was asked to accept it in ignorance of the course the Chief Secretary had intended to take on this Bill. He said last night that as the Reference was now drawn he had no objection in principle to the appointment of the Committee, and all that he asked was that the Opposition might be allowed till Thursday to consider the Reference, seeing that the Leader of the Opposition was absent at the time the Committee was moved.

MR. J. MORLEY: He had been present all the evening.

MR. BRODRICK, continuing, said, he had no objection to the appointment of a Committee to inquire how, in the vast number of cases which would presently come before the Court again, the vast mass of litigation and difficulty which took place in 1881 and 1885 could be avoided. He was also perfectly willing that a Committee should inquire into the enormous sums which, under the Act of 1881, had been given for small holdings for which the tenants had paid nothing, and on which they could show no improvements; but what he did press on the right hon. Gentleman last night was that they should not set up in that House a Court of Appeal to review the judicial decisions of the Commissioners. What was wanted was not an investigation into individual cases of hardship, but a general inquiry into the effect of the Act on landlords, tenants, and encumbrancers respectively. That was not the position taken up by the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: What I tried to point out was this—that even if the hon. Gentleman succeeded in proving that the landlords had lost 25 per cent. of their rents of the last 50 years, that proved nothing against the tenants, who by reason of falling prices and the increasing cost of labour have probably lost more than 25 per cent.

*MR. BRODRICK said, it might be shown that while the landlord had lost 25 per cent., the tenants had got valuable interest for which they had never paid a farthing, and those interests had increased in a way which was never intended. What was the position that day? They had had a Bill moved which covered a good deal of the ground to be taken by the investigating Committee, and they were to be asked, after a few hours' discussion, to read it a second time. Secondly, they were invited to accept a Reference to a Committee which, although narrowed, was still wide enough to enable the House to constitute itself a Court of Appeal for individual cases of hardship; and, thirdly, they were asked to go in for a Committee which would be incomplete. Was it not absurd, if this Bill was to be passed that day, to appoint a Committee to suggest improvements in the law and practice, when hon. Members below the Gangway, some of whom must sit on the Committee, had pledged themselves by backing this Bill as to the changes that were desirable? Why should they go through the solemn farce of appointing a Committee to discover remedies as to which hon. Members had already declared in specific terms what required to be done? How could a Committee be expected to try out the whole Land Question when it was already prejudged? It was true that, although strong speeches had been delivered on the other side of the House, the Government had not stated their views. If the Chief Secretary treated his Committee as an effective Committee; if he said "No" to the Second Reading of the Bill on the ground that he was about to appoint a Committee to inquire into the subject, then, as far as he, speaking as an individual Member, and his hon. Friends behind him were concerned, they would raise no objection whatever to the appointment of the Committee. The action of Irish Members had superseded the previous negotiations as to the Reference, and the Government could not complain of the action of the Opposition. If there was any complaint to be made, the persons against whom it should be made were the hon. Members—the Irish Members—below the Gangway, who did not, until 6 o'clock on Monday evening last, furnish the House with their intended Bill. If the Opposition went into the proposed Committee unfettered the Committee might have a fortunate result, but he did not see how they could be asked to go into the Committee with the Chairman and the majority pledged, when they knew beforehand what would be the result. This Bill made a most serious change in the whole history of Irish land legislation. It recasted very nearly all the most important provisions of the Land Act of 1881; it changed the judicial term and recast the whole of the arrangements as to improvements; it did away with the notice, which had prevented so many evictions; it removed the main security against compulsion in the matter of land purchase; and threw into the net, as a sort of *bonne bouche*, town parks and pasture holdings. He objected to the Bill because of the enormous amount of litigation which it would promote, and regretted that the hon. Member who introduced it had not adopted the principle of the Act of 1887 in regard to change in prices.

Mr. KILBRIDE: I did not do so because the Act of 1887 did not take produce into account.

*Mr. BRODRICK said, he must urge the Chief Secretary not to assent to the Second Reading of the Bill, because the principle of a revision of judicial rent every eight years was fundamentally unsound. The object was to lessen litigation, and the Bill would promote litigation; for every individual rent would have to be fixed twice as often as at present. The question of improvements had been dealt with in discussion in an extremely partial and narrow sense, although in the Bill it was dealt with in a manner only too comprehensive and partisan. He never knew any principle adopted with more deliberation by the House than the one that improvements other than buildings and the reclamation of waste lands, were to be included after 20 years in the fair rent. That was the deliberate affirmation of Parliament, and the principle was affirmed time after time by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and in most specific terms by Mr. Bright.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): On the contrary, the Member for Midlothian stated in 1881 that he did not intend to adopt that principle of the Act of 1870. He would find the reference in *Hansard*.

*Mr. BRODRICK said, that under the present Bill not merely was the tenant to be paid for every improvement, but the presumption was that every improvement must have been made by the tenant or his predecessor in title. On the same principle they might argue that because the tenant did not keep accurate accounts it was for the landlord to prove that his title to the land was good, and in default that the fee-simple should belong to the tenant. If the landlord did not consider the improvements made by the tenant suitable for the holding, and protested against their being made, he would nevertheless be bound to pay him on going out.

Mr. M. HEALY (Cork): This Bill does not amend the Act of 1870 in that respect.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that what had occurred in 1881 was this: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian said that in the Act of 1870 Parliament recognised the principle that the tenant might be compensated by a reasonable lapse of time in respect to improvements which he had made, but in the Act of 1881 they had not recognised that principle.

*Mr. BRODRICK, continuing, said that they must have brought the late Prime Minister to a better mind before the close of the Bill, for the action of the right hon. Gentleman was this: He specifically allowed words to be inserted in the Act of 1881 which were subsequently found by the proceedings to be governed by the Act of 1870. Again, if the tenant proposed to make certain improvements in consideration of having his rent reduced, the Bill said that, after the improvements had been made in pursuance of the contract, the Court was to come in and ascertain the value of the improvements and the amount of rent the landlord was to forego and decide whether the contract, perhaps made many years before, had been fair. Thus the landlord was to be called upon to pay for improvements for which he had already given adequate compensation. Then, if the tenant desired to erect a dwelling upon his holding, and insisted upon building a large house in spite of the objections of the landlord that it was not suited to the holding, and if the tenant left or became a bankrupt, the landlord would have to pay compensation based on the cost of the house he had objected to. Again, if the tenant built a house of moderate size, and if the landlord had made a corresponding allowance in the rent, nevertheless, at the close of the term or in case of bankruptcy, the question of compensation must be decided by the Court. And yet the Court would have no means of determining what was the condition of the land at the time the tenant entered upon the holding, although in 10 years the tenant might have completely ruined it. Again, there was nothing to prevent a tenant from obtaining compensation for improvements which he had himself exhausted by ordinary wear and tear. In fact, the clause of the Bill tore up nearly all the decisions that had been given by the Courts with regard to improvements; yet they were asked to give it a Second Reading without time to consult a single Irish lawyer about it. It was at variance with the professions of the late Leader of the House and those who sat with him when the Acts were passed. [Mr. J. MORLEY: I was not in the House.] There were other points which were not touched by the Bill. In 1881 he protested against the sums that were to be given for tenant-right, and experience had justified what he then said, because payments for tenant-right had done more than anything else to impoverish tenants. When a tenant had paid nothing and had made no improvements he had nothing to sell. A case occurred the other day in which it came out that a tenant's rent was £48 and his valuation was £25. The tenant went into Court to claim a fair rent, but before the case was tried the tenant sold the tenant-right to a neighbour for a capital sum of £630, or, including costs, £661. In that case there had been no outlay for improvements and no expenditure on entering upon the farm; and the outgoing tenant simply sold the £48 rental at a price which added £25 of interest to the rent for the incoming tenant, who was saddled with the extra £25 simply that he might occupy the holding without being called a land-grabber. Could such payments be regarded as an economic solution of the Land Question? There was no provision in the Bill for the rare cases of English-managed estates, on which, of course, all improvements belonged to the landlord. He objected as much as anyone to putting rent upon improvements made by a tenant; but, still, it must be recognised that all improvements did not necessarily belong to the tenant. No reason had been given for the very stringent clause with regard to demesne lands; and town parks were the subject of a bogus agitation in favour of butchers and meat salesmen. This was simply a proposal to give a man for 30s. an acre what he could let for £5 or £6 an acre. He regarded the agitation in regard to town parks as being a bogus agitation. It was an agitation which served very well to fill up gaps in the speeches of Members below the Gangway, but there was no bottom to it at all. The settlement arrived at in the Land Act of 1887 he had heard spoken of time after time as a fair compromise. Town parks must remain, and a man who owned a town had a right to the natural development of that town. He ought not to have agricultural tenants planted on him right up to the houses of the town if he required to let the land to those who were responsible for the markets of the town. Was it to the advantage of those who had to take their cattle to a town from a long distance that they should not have a place in which to house them the night before the sale? The promoters of this Bill wanted to carry out their views by Act of Parliament, although they could not get a lawyer in Ireland to support them. He hardly thought that the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading wished the House to take him seriously in the few arguments he advanced as to pasture farms. The hon. Member said he knew cases in which 90 per cent. of farms were broken up, and which were yet held to be pasture farms. Such cases were utterly at variance with the legal decisions given by the Court of Appeal. In one case the Court of Appeal affirmed a decision of the Land Commission holding not to be a pasture farm one of 195 acres, of which the tenant was not allowed to break up more than 40 acres, and from which he was not allowed to remove any hay. In another case the Court of Appeal, presided over by Lord Ashbourne, then Lord Chancellor, decided that a farm of 150 acres, all in pasture, of which 20 acres might be broken up, was not a pasture farm. Under Clause 11 of the Bill it was proposed that lettings beyond a life interest should be legalised. He thought that this would lead to very great inconveniences and complications, and it would cut at the root of all agreements with regard to limited owners. Until the law of limited owners was abolished altogether it would be impossible for any Law Officer on the Treasury Bench to support the clause. Again, nothing could be more inequitable than to enable a man who had been evicted for non-payment of rent and had been reinstated to come back as a present tenant on the same terms as men who had paid their rents from first to last and had never been evicted. This Bill would put an end at one stroke to the written notice which had been called the "eviction-made-easy" notice, but which could not be shown by statistics to be such a notice and which could be defended on the ground that it conduced to peace and good order in Ireland. This was a deliberate attempt on the part of Members below the Gangway to substitute for amicable relations between landlords and tenants those embittered and hostile feelings which Parliament had to a large extent endeavoured to remove by the Act of 1887. Those Members wanted to see the battering-ram in operation and Land League huts full, whilst those who opposed this Bill wanted to see the Land League huts empty and peace and good feeling prevailing between landlords and tenants. If it were only in the interest of the peace of Ireland, and solely because the Bill contained such a provision, he, for one, would never consent to its passage. He had endeavoured to show the House that this Bill was not the innocuous, small, and insignificant measure that had been suggested in the extremely dove-like speech of the hon. Member who introduced it. He had endeavoured to show that, if passed, it would entirely change the policy of Parliament. He had tried to point out that it would preclude the Opposition from assenting to that Committee which otherwise they were prepared to assent to. If the Opposition were determined in their opposition to that Committee, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) might count upon a couple of nights' Debate with regard to it. He ventured, however, to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman not to prejudge the question, but to say that this Bill, which had been produced hurriedly, which would promote litigation and must burke inquiry, was a measure that ought not hastily to be accepted and was one which he was justified in declining to vote for.

*Mr. SMITH-BARRY (Hunts, S.) said, he had paused for a moment or two before rising in the expectation that this remarkable and far-reaching Bill would have obtained more support from Members below the Gangway than had yet been forthcoming. The Bill had been printed and circulated only a few hours before its Second Reading had been moved. It was full of all sorts of deep, legal questions and it required very long and careful consideration. That the Second Reading of such a Bill should have been proposed on a Wednesday and that not a single leading Member of the Party below the Gangway should have risen in support of it were facts that must fill English and Scotch Members with amazement. He objected to the Bill on two or three grounds. In the first place, he objected to everlasting tinkering with the Irish Land Question. That question had now been before the country for 23 or 24 years. Land Act after Land Act had been passed, only to give rise to fresh demands. We were told that the tenants were no better off for all the legislation that had been adopted on their behalf, and certainly the landlords were not. It was most indecent to rush Bills of this kind through the House of Commons. As to the proposed Committee on the Irish Land Question, he had no desire to burke discussion on the subject or to throw unreasonable and unnatural obstacles in the way of it; but he thought Members had a right to some Debate upon the question before appointing a Committee, and he felt that if this Bill were read a second time any inquiry by a Committee afterwards would be simply a delusion and a sham. The hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Pinkerton) had quoted, or rather misquoted, a private conversation he (Mr. Smith-Barry) had had with him in the Lobby. The hon. Member had stated that he (Mr. Smith-Barry) had said that his tenants in Ireland were better rent-payers than his tenants in Huntingdonshire, and that the Huntingdonshire farmers were very bad rent-payers.

*MR. PINKERTON, interposing, said, he begged the hon. Member's pardon for having tried to place him before the House in a very favourable light. He had been glad to believe that the hon. Member held the opinion that the Irish tenant-farmers were better rent-payers than the tenant-farmers of Huntingdonshire. That, of course, was no reflection on the tenant-farmers of Huntingdonshire.

*MR. SMITH-BARRY said that, begging the hon. Member's pardon, he had never said anything of the kind. What he had said was that more rent was obtained from the Irish tenants than from the tenants of Huntingdonshire, because, whilst the tenants of Ireland had suffered very slightly indeed from the agricultural depression, and their rents had been very considerably reduced by law, the depression in agriculture in the Eastern Counties of England, and especially in Huntingdonshire, had been such that it was almost impossible for the tenants to make a living there at all. His statement had been that the tenant-farmers of Ireland were relatively in an exceedingly prosperous condition. As to the provisions of this Bill, all who were in the unfortunate position of being Irish landlords must look upon them as being exceedingly injurious to their interests, inasmuch as they went further in the direction of robbing the Irish landlords than previous Acts. As far as he could gather, no arguments whatever had been put forward in favour of the first provision—namely, the change in the statutory term. He did not think there was any special virtue in a term of 15 years, any more than there was any special virtue in a term of seven years. When the Bessborough Commission was sitting, it was recommended that the statutory term should be 31 years, and the usual term in Scotland was, he believed, either 14 or 19 years. The same objection applied, however, whatever the length of the term. If the term in Ireland were changed now from 15 to seven or eight years, the probability was that two years hence it would be said that the latter term was too long and that there must be a further reduction to three years or two years, even if they had not to go back to annual agreements. There was no doubt that the present system of fixing fair rents was a cumbrous, an inconvenient, an expensive, and an objectionable system. He himself, and all the Irish landlords he knew, would be very glad indeed if some simpler and possibly more automatic system could be devised by which the present expense, irritation, and annoyance could be avoided. It was not his business to suggest the alterations that were desirable, but he said that the alterations of the statutory term from 15 years to seven would not meet the difficulty. The only effect of such an alteration would be that the expense and annoyance of the present system would be doubled, inasmuch as the partie would have to go into Court twice in 1 years instead of once. As to the question of tenants' improvements, he woul say at once that no landlord had the slightest wish to rob any tenant of hi improvements. The case that had bee brought forward by the hon. Member fo South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) wa a very scandalous and bad case, and i provisions could be made to meet such case none of them in that quarter of th House would have any objection what ever to the adoption of such provisions on the contrary, all of them woul be only too glad to support them These proposals went a great dea further than that. They gave a pre sumption to the tenant of being the owner and creator of these improvements from time immemorial. It was all very well to say that the landlords kept books, and that the tenants did not. He was sorry to say that all the landlords did not keep books; or if they did, the books very often disappeared, or were not available when estates changed hands. It was the most difficult thing in the world for landlords to produce evidence on these matters. There was nothing under such a Bill as this to prevent tenants coming forward, as they constantly did, and claiming compensation for every sort of improvement, real and imaginary, which they might assert had been carried out either by themselves or their predecessors years and generations before. The landlords were at the present moment most severely mulcted under the Land Acts, and if such an amendment of the law as this were effected the robbery would be increased and multiplied to an enormous extent. Besides that, it had always been considered that the owner provided the land and the tenant the labour. The tenants after a reasonable time were able to recoup themselves for their labour and the money they had spent on their holdings, and it was supposed that the arrangement would work out equally. But if this was to be upset a great deal of injustice would be done. It was taken for granted by Members below the Gangway on that (the Opposition) side of the House and by many English Members that improvements on Irish farms had always been made by the tenants. He maintained that that was a perfect fallacy. The fact was, that in heaps of cases what improvements had been made in past years, at any rate, had been made conjointly by landlord and tenant. Timber and other material had been given by the landlords——

An hon. MEMBER: And charged for.

MR. SMITH-BARRY said, that probably some bad landlords had charged for these things, but in the enormous majority of cases no charge had been made.

An hon. MEMBER: Where?

MR. SMITH-BARRY said, that before the Land Act of 1881 landlords had been in the habit of supplying the material and the tenants the labour for improvements on farms; but naturally since that time landowners had not been such fools as to do so. Under this Bill the tenant was to have the benefit of the improvements. They were to enjoy, as it were, the "betterment;" but how about the worsement? Anyone who knew anything about Ireland was aware that on a great many small farms the land had been entirely worked out and would not produce anything like the crops it formerly did. Farmers would tell them, "Oh! the land is not so productive as it used to be; it will not bear the same crops." Why not? Because those farmers and their predecessors had worked out the land. And then, having worked out the land, they went into the Land Court and obtained a reduction of rent in consequence. He (Mr. Smith-Barry) maintained that if the tenant was to have the benefit of the improvements he had made since the time of the Flood, the landlord ought to have some compensation on his side for the damage and injury done to his land. He was entitled, at least, to have restored to him the prairie value of which hon. Members were so fond of talking. He saw in the last Report of the Congested Districts Board that there was an admission of this kind. It said—

> "In many instances, owing to previous exhausting of the soil and the want of proper tillage, the crops are very bad."

He would not go at length into the question of town parks and pasture holdings, of demesne lands, but, clearly, it was necessary to leave ample room for the natural expansion of towns. When they got a Home Rule Government it might be expected that Irish towns would grow smaller instead of larger, but at present he knew of cases where the reverse process was taking place. The town of Tipperary, for instance, with which he had a great deal to do, was extending, and he maintained that to lock up the land in the neighbourhood of such towns would be to inflict the greatest injury on the shopkeepers and inhabitants generally. No doubt there were some provisions in the Bill which were good, but in the main it was a bad Bill, and an attempt to cut out of the land legislation of Ireland every provision that offered any fair protection to the rights of the landlord.

Further than that, it broke the last thread that remained of freedom of contract. It was another plan for whittling away the property which belonged to the landlords, many of whom had bought in the Landed Estates Court, and had been given a Parliamentary title to their land. In these days of agricultural depression it was most important that all persons interested in agriculture should pull together, and that no attempt should be made by one class to rob another. He himself lived in Ireland as much as he could, and he intended to continue doing so, whatever legislation might be brought forward. He hoped, however, that he might be allowed to live there in peace and goodfellowship with his neighbours, but he was certain that such legislation as this would not tend to the welfare of Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The hon. Member who has just sat down has not been quite consistent. He began by saying that the first and fundamental objection to this Bill is that it is another piece of that everlasting tinkering with land legislation which, in his opinion, has done so much mischief in Ireland. But I was astonished to hear the hon. Member afterwards commit himself to the doctrine of the expediency, if not the urgency, of having some automatic device — such, for example, as a sliding scale — for the purpose of dealing with one of the very mischiefs with which this Bill professes to deal. In his closing remarks, also, he admitted that there are in the Bill proposals with which he finds little fault, and in which I presume, therefore, he discerns some germs of advantage to Ireland. There was, therefore, some inconsistency in the hon. Member's speech, but I think the House will feel that in that speech, as in every speech that has been delivered to-day, we have heard a note of moderation which is not very often heard in discussions on Irish Land Questions. Excepting the hon. Member who has just sat down and the hon. Member for the Guildford Division of Surrey, nobody, not even the Mover of the Amendment, has declared an antagonism to the proposals in the Bill, and we have even had the unwonted pleasure of hearing the hon. Member for South Tyrone make an excellent speech strongly in favour of a measure promoted by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway on the other side of the House, and announcing his intention to vote for the Bill. The hon. and gallant Member who moved the Amendment said—the way he put it was a little Hibernian—"I do not oppose the Bill; I only do not want to pass it now."

COLONEL WARING: I said I did not oppose the whole Bill.

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not suppose that the hon. Member agrees with every proposal in the Bill, but he is not an opponent of it, and he does not move his Amendment on account of the faults of the measure, but on the ground that it is inopportune at the present moment. The Amendment only declares that Bills of this kind are

"inexpedient and unfair, pending the proposed inquiry into the working of the Irish Land Acts."

We may take it, therefore, that, although the hon. and gallant Member's Amendment if carried would destroy the Bill, he does not disapprove this particular measure.

COLONEL WARING: The right hon. Gentleman may take it that my words mean exactly what they express, and nothing more.

MR. J. MORLEY; Just so. I presume that the language is used in its ordinary meaning, and that no esoteric sense is to be ascribed to it. Considering what has been the history of Bills relating to Irish land, especially Wednesday afternoon Bills, it is certainly an important fact that there has been no thorough-going antagonism to the proposals of the Bill, taken as a whole. What is the argument of the hon. and gallant Member who moved the Amendment? It is that as a Select Committee to inquire into the working of Irish land legislation has been moved for we ought not to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill. The hon. Member for Guildford made me an offer which I do not consider at all a generous offer, and for which I do not thank him in the least. He said that if I would promise to vote against the Second Reading he would graciously——

*MR. BRODRICK: No. What I intended to say was that if the right hon. Gentleman would not commit himself to the provisions of this Bill I would withdraw my objection to the Committee.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Then my hon. Friend wishes on an occasion when a very important proposal is made to the House, when a Bill is brought forward which it is admitted contains meritorious provisions, that I, who am responsible for Irish administration, should take the course of walking out. That is a course which I cannot consent to take. But let me recall to the House the curious history of this proposed Committee, on which so much stress is now laid. A proposal was made for a Select Committee, which, in my judgment, did not go one inch beyond the ground and area which such an inquiry ought to cover. However, I found that in some parts of the House there was a feeling strong enough to prevent the Committee from being appointed, and that the view was entertained that the proposed terms of Reference were too wide. I do not share that opinion in the least degree, and I would not have been a party to the mutilation of the Order of Reference if I did not believe that the topics covered by the original Order would be certainly dealt with in a future Session. But so anxious was I that the Committee should be appointed and should get to work that I accepted Amendments, gave way along the line, and agreed to an Order of Reference which the Leader of the Opposition himself said would be received in all quarters of the House without opposition. Then the hon. Member for Guildford says, "You only gave us 48 hours' notice." But it was not a new Motion. The Motion had been before the House ever since the beginning of the Session, and it had been on the Paper since Monday. And then the hon. Member says that he had no opportunity of consulting his Leader, though his Leader himself advised the course I took, and had been sitting at his side all through the evening. I must say that to pretend that a full opportunity was not given of considering the Order of Reference, as I put it on the Paper, is not a very reasonable or a very candid position to take. He says, "All those who vote for the Second Reading of the Bill will go into the Committee pledged." There are some who are pledged against the Bill. Are we all to walk out? Does the hon. Member seriously mean that we are to talk the Bill out or in some way adjourn the consideration of it? [Mr. Brodrick: Certainly.] The hon. Member wants to use our votes now to destroy the Committee, and to use the Committee to destroy the Bill.

*Mr. BRODRICK: If the right hon. Gentleman will consent not to take the decision on this Bill to-day, and so not to prejudge the whole question, we will make no objection whatever to the appointment of the Committee.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am in a position when I am not bound to make any further bargain. I have accepted the suggestion made by the hon. Member's own Leader. It is a suggestion approved by everybody in the House, excepting, perhaps, the hon. Member himself; and therefore I am not going to make any further bargain about it. I shall propose the Committee, and if hon. Gentlemen will not let us have it, so be it. Meanwhile I shall certainly say what I have to say, and take the action which I think proper upon the Bill. What would a vote in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill really mean with respect to the Committee? The Bill is brought in to deal with certain difficulties and defects which were pointed out by the hon. Members who in moderate speeches moved and seconded the Second Reading. They were further pointed out and described with clearness and ample illustration by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The fact is—as everyone who is at all acquainted with what is going on in Ireland is aware—that a certain construction has been put upon words in the Acts of 1870 and 1881 by the Courts—a construction of which I have no intention, as I am not competent, to make any complaint. But the effect of this construction in some 50 cases has been to overlay the subject with a number of doubts and difficulties which everyone would wish to see settled. The object in view is to put into more simple and definite form on the Statute Book what is believed to have been the true intention and policy of Parliament when the Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1891 were passed. In voting for the Second Reading of this Bill we shall affirm the proposition that these difficulties of construction should be removed, and in the direction of a certain policy which we believe to have been the policy of Parliament in 1881 and 1891. I am going to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill. I cannot see that by so doing I am in any substantial way prejudging the inquiry for which I have asked the House to appoint a Committee. I regard the case as one of those which are perfectly familiar to the House—the case of a Bill being read a second time subject to reference to a Select Committee. My point of view is that, though there are provisions in the Bill which I cannot accept, we are appointing a Select Committee to inquire mainly into the points raised by the Bill. There are, indeed, points in the Bill which are not, I suspect, covered by my Order of Reference. But, roughly speaking—and this is the justification of the vote which I am going to give—having moved, and intending to continue to move, the appointment of the Select Committee, I contend that this is the ordinary process. This Bill cannot get through its stages before the Select Committee which I have moved for has reported. Of that there cannot be a doubt, and therefore, in assenting to the Second Reading, I am not in the least prejudging the issues into which I have invited the House to appoint a Committee to inquire. The hon. Member for Guildford gave what I cannot but regard as an extremely exaggerated description of the purport of this Bill. He said that it recasts the whole Land Code of Ireland. [Mr. BRODRICK : Hear, hear!] When he goes through the Bill chapter by chapter and clause by clause he will find that description to be a gross exaggeration. There has been an enormous amount of litigation to the disadvantage of both the landlords and the tenants; and many of the sections of this Bill are framed with a view to remove difficulties in the construction of the law. They put the policy of the Land Code since 1870 on a definite, assured, and unmistakable ground. But that is not recasting the Land Code. It does not touch the organic provisions of the legislation of 1881 and of the Purchase Act of 1891 to alter the terms of the tenants' insurance fund. There are some provisions in the Bill of a far-reaching character; but, taking the Bill as a whole, these proposals are proposals of reform in detail, affecting mainly, certainly not minor or secondary points, but points which do not go to the root or principle of the legislation from 1870 to 1891. Take the statutory term. There is a provision in the Bill to reduce the statutory term of 15 years. I think that provision is open to a great deal of criticism. I do not see how Irish landlords or tenants are to carry on if the statutory term is to be made too short. But, at the same time, in the Crofters Act of 1886 the statutory term was fixed at seven years. Therefore, there is nothing revolutionary in the present proposal. A term of 15 years may too long, and a term of seven years may be too short; but it is a matter for discussion what is the proper term. I should have said that this Committee is not appointed, so to speak, in the air or out of the Minister's own head. It is appointed because next year applications will be lodged for the revision of judicial rents. Therefore, it is perfectly certain there is not a Member in this House from Ireland—not even the right hon. Member for the Dublin University, nor even the hon. Member who spoke last—who will deny that it is important that the attention of Parliament should be directed now, while you have yet time, through a Committee and through other means by which you can force Parliament to legislate, to the expediency of considering whether you cannot hit upon some scheme less costly, and which shall lead to less litigation than the present conditions. I now have to show that my hon. Friend has entirely exaggerated the present Bill. Take the proposal about town parks. I am inclined to concur with the hon. Member for South Tyrone in saying that the Bill goes a little far in that direction. But, on the other hand, it can hardly be denied, in view of what was intended when the Act passed, that the Courts, in some of their decisions, have gone too far in the other direction. I will not go into cases—I have them here—but I will say that I think probably this clause goes too far. Even if it does, that does not justify the statement that this is a complete recasting of the Code of Land Legislation. The same remark applies to the provision in regard to demesne lands. Then again, where the owner of a demesne makes a distinct letting of a substantial piece of his land for a term, it does then seem to me a great hardship, and not within the view and intention of Parliament when passing the Act, that the occupier of the land should be so debarred from the benefits of the Act, and I do not gather that the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has moved what practically amounts to the rejection of the Bill will demur to that proposition. So with reference to sub-letting. That proposal may be right or it may be wrong, but it does not overthrow any precedent, nor does it introduce into this Bill anything deserving the name of revolutionary, disorganising, or confiscatory. It is a matter upon which experts may differ as to important details, but, by altering the provisions in this clause, you are not inviting such a description as the hon. Member gives to the Bill. [Mr. T. W. Russell : Speak up.] There are certain legal points of great importance. I think one of them was referred to by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and in reference to this proposal I have to say it may be a right or it may be a wrong thing, but it is not a proposal that entitles you to call the Bill revolutionary and confiscatory, and I do not regard it as going so much to the root of the Bill as to justify even those who disapprove of the particular proposal in voting against the Second Reading of the Bill. I will not go into further details of the Bill as to pastures and so forth. I have said enough to show that I do not regard the Bill as a revolutionary or disorganising Bill. I regard it in substance as it is named, an amending Bill, as a Bill calculated in its proposals to undo much mischief that has been done. I have no doubt in good faith, by the decisions of the Courts, and as enabling us to place on record definitely after these many years of experience, what is the view which the Government of the day and Parliament take of this Land Code. It has been said that this is an attempt to tinker with the Irish Land Law. I can only say was it to be expected, dealing with land in Ireland, dealing with it in a way that in many respects was novel, that a code of that kind was not to be open to amendment or revision, was not sure to disclose from the very necessities of the case errors in construction? and as this Bill calls attention to that fact and makes proposals which are not, as a whole, calculated to overthrow or impair what is sound and good in the successive steps of legislation with reference to Irish land since 1880, I do not feel that I am taking a rash step either in view of future legislative action on my own part or in view of the Inquiry which I hope the House will assent to, in announcing that I intend to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill.

Mr. D. PLUNKET (Dublin University): We have heard a good deal in a recent Debate in this House about the usefulness or otherwise of the functions of private Members and of the injury or the advantage of abolishing their opportunities of interfering in the business of this House ; but I am sure if any enemy of the functions and privileges of a private Member desired an object-lesson in support of his views, he would certainly have obtained it by the proceedings of this day, and if I may venture to say so, by the attitude which the right hon. Gentleman has now assumed with regard to these proceedings and with regard to the fate of this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman stated, and stated truly, that there had been a tone of moderation in the speeches which had been delivered this day. I think he might have added also that there was a tone of unreality, for everybody knew and felt that happily the proceedings of this day, though, indeed, involving serious considerations if they were seriously dealt with, can have practically, as the case stands, no effect whatever, and that the whole of this Debate will leave the question really where it stood before the Debate began. But the right hon. Gentleman took advantage of this tone of moderation that he referred to to fasten upon those who had spoken in support of the Amendment which is now before the House an admission on their part that they were not opposed to the principles of this Bill. What are the principles of this Bill? There are a dozen or a score of principles in the Bill, and some of these principles I, for one, quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman, if fairly and justly dealt with, are proper subjects for consideration. A few of the clauses as they stand—and these are not the important ones—I should be prepared to agree with, but together with these clauses, to which no objection has been taken by my hon. Friend, there are other clauses involving principles of the most important and, as I consider, the most unjust character that have ever been proposed in any of the various Bills which have been introduced on this subject by hon. Members who sit below the Gangway; and the most remarkable part of the speech to which we have just listened is this: that while the right hon. Gentleman adverted to a few of the proposals of this Bill, with which he said he was not in entire accord, and the greater number of which he said, in their present condition, at all events, he could not approve, he said nothing whatever of that which is, as was well said by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, the cardinal principle of this Bill, and that is this 6th clause, which deals with and proposes a new legislation with reference to the question of improvements. The right hon. Gentleman must have known, and felt, well that it is really the pith and marrow of the Bill. Be it right or wrong, that is the part of this Bill which excites real interest in Ireland. On this subject the right hon. Gentleman has not said a word. I would ask leave in a minute or two to refer again to that part of the subject, and I will now ask the House to consider under what circumstances this Bill is introduced, having within it not only moderate, but comparatively narrow proposals, of narrow interest and importance, but having also proposals which would absolutely revolutionise in the most delicate and important parts the conclusions at which this House has again and again arrived with the support of the Government of the day—whether it belonged to the Party opposite or to those who sit on this side of the House? The House has again and again refused to give its assent to such proposals, and this will be the first time that ever one of these Bills has passed the Second Reading with the assent—even the qualified assent we have heard to-day—of the representative of the Government which deals, as this Bill proposes to deal, with that great subject of legislation—the tenants' improvements, and many other subjects. How does the case stand? We have been trying for I do not know how many years—certainly now for a quarter of a century—to deal with this Irish Land Question. It is admitted on all hands that the Irish tenant has been better dealt with and more favourably dealt with by the legislation of this country, that he has been more protected and more assisted financially as well as in other respects by the Government of this country, than the occupiers of land in any other country, I believe, in the civilised world, and, as a matter of fact, the Irish tenant is now in a better position to discharge his duty and pay his rent than the tenants of this country and of Scotland. That rent—which has been ascertained by the tribunals established by land legislation to be payable—can be paid, has been paid, and is being paid, except when the unfortunate tenants are instigated by agitators for their own purposes to refuse to pay the rent which these agitators admit themselves they are well able to pay. It is under these circumstances that we are asked, one fine Wednesday afternoon on short debate, having had this Bill before us only a couple of days, to reverse in its most essential particulars, so far as a decision taken on such an occasion as the present can affect the issue, the main principle and the principles of the legislation which has thus been deliberately arrived at. I have no intention of following the hon. Member through all the clauses of this Bill. They have already been most ably dealt with by my hon. Friend the Member for the Guildford Division, and many of them by my hon. Friend the Member for South Hunts; but I wish to be allowed to call attention to what I have described as the real backbone of this Bill, and to ask the House is it prepared to affirm, by giving a Second Reading to this Bill, the principle there laid down? What is the proposal as regards tenants' improvements in this Bill? It has been stated by the hon. Member for South Tyrone—who, although he has always fought a fair and gallant battle for the tenants, was obliged to say he himself would not go all the length of the proposals of this Bill as regards the improvements—that the purpose of this Bill is that not only shall the tenants in the future fixing of fair rents have a full return for all the improvements which he has himself made in the land by his own money or labour, but that he also shall claim to have and shall be given, if this Bill were passed into law, the whole of the improvable value of the land which was demised to him by his landlord. I ask hon. Members for England, Scotland, and Wales—I do not care how extreme are their views on the subject—are they prepared to adopt that view? The right hon. Gentleman has not said one word upon the subject. I will venture to make one or two brief references to the opinions which have been expressed on former occasions by some who, I think, will be admitted to be high authorities on this subject, and who lay down principles which are in direct and diametric opposition to the principles proposed in this Bill. Let us see what was said by Mr. Isaac Butt, who was certainly a very strong advocate of the tenants' claims. Here is a quotation from Mr. Butt, which was used by one of my hon. Friends in a former Debate upon this subject, and which I quote from *Hansard*. Mr. Butt said—

> "The additional value is not the creation solely of the tenant. It is the creation partly of the expenditure of the skill of the tenant and partly of the inherent capability of the soil."

Mr. Butt pointed out cases in illustration of this contention, and went on to say—

> "These powers of the soil were the property of the landlord, and he has the right to have them returned to him when the tenant's interest expires. He has not the right, however, to appropriate the expenditure which the tenant has incurred in making them productive."

With that view of the law I venture humbly and entirely to concur, but I say that the provisions of this Bill will directly reverse and destroy the principle which is there laid down. I will only ask leave to quote one other authority, because I think the right hon. Gentleman who spoke just now can scarcely be aware of the doctrine which has been laid down and the principles which have been proclaimed by the present Lord Chancellor of his own Administration. This subject, as I have said, has been for many years before Parliament, and there was a Debate on this subject in 1883, when a Bill was introduced into this House which dealt with this matter, though not exactly in the same language, in precisely the same terms as this present Bill does. This is what the present Lord Chancellor, who was then the Solicitor General (Mr. Herschell) said. He first dealt with the supposition that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, who was at that time Prime Minister, had given some sanction to this new view—that is to say, to proposals similar to those in the present Bill. Mr. Herschell said—

> "It is, in effect, a complete revolution of the provisions of the Act of 1881."

And now let me observe that the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has said that his object in assenting to the Second Reading of this Bill was that the provisions of the Bill should be considered with the view to their alteration, if necessary, in the direction indicated by the provisions which the Bill contains.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am afraid I must not have expressed myself clearly. What I said was that the Select Committee would consider these decisions of the Courts, in connection with its construction of the various Acts, with the view to seeing what was the intention and policy of Parliament.

Mr. D. PLUNKET: It does not seem to me that the right hon. Gentleman can very clearly explain to us what is the object of voting for the Second Reading of this Bill at all. Here is a Bill crammed full of principles, and these principles are to be developed by the adoption of a certain manner of treating them. "Oh," says the right hon. Gentleman, "I think these principles ought to be considered, but I mean to affirm nothing at all by voting for the Second Reading of the Bill," which is really full of provisions for giving a practical and specific direction for the treatment of these very principles. In the Debate from which I am about to quote the present Lord Chancellor it was stated that the object of the Bill then before the House was to restore as far as possible the intention of those who were the original framers of this system of land legislation—that was the Land Act of 1881—and subsequent Acts as far as they affected it; and it was alleged by someone in this Debate that the right hon. Member for Midlothian was in favour of the change that was proposed by that Bill. His Solicitor General declared that that was not the case, and went on to say, after the words I have quoted, that—

> "He might claim to know something of that Act, as he was present during the whole of the discussions which took place upon it, and he said the Bill was deliberately brought forward for the purpose of re-opening matters which were settled by the Land Act (1881) and to completely revolutionise the character of that settlement."

He went on to say—

> "They had heard about the prairie value. Hon. Members opposite had contended that all the landlord was entitled to was the prairie value, and this was a Bill for depriving him of anything but the prairie value. It proposed that prairie value should be the test of fair rent, and that anything beyond that should be the property of the tenant in occupation of the land."

He puts the principle very clearly here. He says—

> "Suppose two tenants paid each £100 for a farm and applied equal skill and energy to their work, in the case of one farm making it worth £100 more and in the case of the other only of the enhanced value of £5. What made the difference? It was the inherent capabilities of the land that gave the extra value, and this no more belonged to the tenant than did the land itself. Therefore the judgment in 'Adams *v.* Dunseath' on that point was perfectly correct. He maintained that the provision in Clause 5 was not only opposed to the decision in that case, but was manifestly unjust. They must take this scheme as a whole, and, taking it in that way, it came to nothing but this—that everything beyond prairie value would be deemed, unless the contrary was proved, to be the property of the tenant, and on the basis of that alone ought fair rent to be fixed."

The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary says—

> "Although I vote for the Second Reading of this Bill, I know very well it can never come to anything. I know very well there is not the smallest chance of the Bill passing into law until after the Committee has reported, at all events, on this portion of its investigation."

He might have added, if he would remember what was said by his own Lord Chancellor, that if it were carried through this House and were sent up to another place, his own Lord Chancellor would find it impossible, after the quotations I have now read—skilful as I know politicians and statesmen are to reverse their opinions and act in direct opposition to the opinions which they had formerly expressed—to support it, and I do not believe that Lord Herschell would do anything of the kind. I am perfectly satisfied if this Bill ever passed through its stages in this House, and were to reach another place, Lord Herschell himself would be bound by the principles there laid down to reject what has been admitted on all hands to be the cardinal feature and main principle of this Bill. What position are we left in by the attitude taken up by the Chief Secretary? I might refer to other provisions of this Bill almost as important as this, which have on former occasions been as decidedly opposed and rejected and denounced, I might say, by the Representatives of the Government over which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian presided from time to time. I am satisfied, however, if the House will allow me to take that individual principle as an illustration of what I mean, and in what position is the House placed? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary gave in his adhesion to certain less important principles of the Bill, and to some others of what I may describe as of second-class importance, he has given a very qualified assent, but upon this main and leading feature of the Bill he said never a word. Then, I ask, what is the meaning of this voting for the Second Reading of the Bill? He admits that it has no chance of passing. Has ever anyone heard that a Member, much more a Minister, can approve of the Second Reading of a Bill without expressing any opinion one way or the other upon its leading provision. I can put but one construction upon the attitude taken up by the right hon. Gentleman, and it is this: that while he feels it is absurd to give such reasons as he has given for voting for such Second Reading, he desires to keep himself quite unpledged as regards the future on all its main principles, and as to the Committee on this Bill, he says it is not in any way to trammel him or any person else in the course they may take. So far as that goes it is satisfactory. We understand now that the view of the right hon. Gentleman is that if that Committee should be appointed and should sit, he will find himself quite unfettered by the Second Reading on this Bill. Then why on earth has he encouraged this House to spend all to-day in discussing these principles? The right hon. Gentleman has tried to place the construction upon the Amendment which has been moved by the hon. and gallant Member for Down that it was an acceptance of the principle of the Bill. It was nothing of the kind. I say it was simply another form of moving the adjournment of this Debate, and I submit to the House and to any candid man in this House was not that a reasonable, and fair, and natural course to suggest to this House to take under the circumstances which I have now stated? Here is a Bill to the principles of which the right hon. Gentleman does not desire to commit himself in any way. Here is a Bill which others may think, if the Second Reading is adopted will, to a certain extent, affect the proceedings of the Committee which he is anxious should sit. Is it not the most natural course to suggest that the further consideration of this question should be postponed until the House has before it the result of the inquiries of this Committee. There is a wide difference of opinion between Members sitting in different parts of this House as to the reality of many of the grievances which have been put forward; there is still a wider difference, supposing that these grievances really exist, as to which course legislation should take to deal in any necessity of that kind which may exist. Is it not a most reasonable and natural course to suggest, is it not the ordinary practice of the House, under the circumstances, that the further consideration of the question should be postponed until we shall have before us the result of the inquiry of the Committee which is to inquire into every matter included in the Bill?

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 254; Noes 165.—(Division List, No. 22.)

Main Question put, and agreed to. Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

FRUIT IDENTIFICATION BILL.—(No. 37.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) said, he moved the Second Reading of this innocent measure for the identification, and for the regulation and sale of foreign and colonial fruit. He was sure the House would, after the recent political Debate, welcome this social measure, which was for the advantage of British fruit growers, British jam manufacturers, and the consumers of British fruit and British jam. The sole object of the Bill was to put a stop to fraud in fruit in exactly the same way as the Margarine Act of 1887 put a stop to fraud in butter. He purposely excluded from the operation of the Bill all fruits which were not grown out-of-doors in the United Kingdom, such as oranges, pine apples, and grapes. The Bill would not prevent foreign and colonial fruit from coming into this country, and anyone who wished to get foreign or colonial fruit could do so; but he was anxious that those who desired to purchase British fruit should be able to do so without being cheated. His Bill was founded on the provisions of the Margarine Act, which had proved in operation, especially in Ireland, to be very popular. It was, as he had said, an innocent measure, and was solely intended for the benefit of honest-dealing people and for the suppression of fraud. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Hozier.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): I think that of all the extraordinary measures that have ever been submitted to the House of Commons this is the most extraordinary. It is described as a Bill for the identification and for the regulation and sale of foreign and colonial fruit, and it makes it a condition that no foreign or colonial fruit shall be sold, either wholesale or retail, without being branded.

MR. HOZIER: The packages, not the fruit.

MR. MUNDELLA: The Bill says—

> "Every package, whether open or closed, containing foreign or colonial fruit shall be branded or otherwise durably marked on the top, bottom, and sides in capital letters not less than three-quarters of an inch square."

MR. HOZIER: That is copied word for word from the Margarine Act.

MR. MUNDELLA: Margarine and fruit are two different things. The Bill goes on—

"And if such foreign and colonial fruit be exposed for sale by retail there shall be attached to each parcel thereof so exposed, and in such manner as to be clearly visible to the purchaser, a label marked only in printed capital letters not less than one and a-half inches square, 'Grown abroad,' and every person selling foreign or colonial fruit by retail, save in a package duly branded or otherwise durably marked as aforesaid, shall in every case deliver the same to the purchaser in or with a paper wrapper, bag, or other receptacle, or accompanied by a ticket or label, on which shall be printed in capital letters not less than a quarter of an inch square the words 'Grown abroad.'"

Thus, every coster with his barrow or every old woman keeping an apple-stall, if she sells a pennyworth of apples must put them in a bag duly branded with letters a quarter of an inch square showing that they were grown abroad. If she does not do so she is liable to a penalty of £50, and if she is an habitual offender she is liable to three months' hard labour. But that is not all. The presumption is to be against the vendor. The fruits scheduled in the Bill are apples, apricots, asparagus, blackberries, cherries, cobnuts, cranberries, cucumbers, currants, damsons, filberts, gooseberries, mulberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes, and walnuts, and the vendor must prove that all these are grown at home or abroad. At every fair and market in this country these fruits, imported from all parts of Europe, are sold in pennyworths, and in London thousands of costers earn a living by selling cheap fruit. To say that these men should label each package with the name of the place of origin is ridiculous.

*Mr. **HOZIER**: The words are, "or accompanied by a ticket or label." It is all word for word in the Margarine Act.

Mr. **MUNDELLA**: Imagine a boy who goes to a stall for a pennyworth of apples requiring a ticket showing the country in which the fruit is grown! I hope the hon. Gentleman will have the courage of his convictions, and, as we still have five minutes before half-past 5, take a Division on this Bill.

*Sir **W. HART DYKE** (Kent, Dartford) said, his hon. Friend who introduced the Bill could not do better than take a Division, if only to show how sincere was the interest which Her Majesty's Government took in agricultural questions. Perhaps the President of the Board of Trade was a little too much occupied with other affairs to know that at the present moment fruit culture was the only source of profit on which the distressed agriculturist could rely; or perhaps he was ignorant that in the County of Kent—in the constituency which he had had the honour of representing for 29 years — there were thousands of acres of fruit land on which a very large number of people had to depend for a living. The object of this Bill was to protect the fruit-growers of this country from the fraud that was now practised on them by the foreigner. If the right hon Gentleman would go to the quays at Antwerp, or any other foreign town, he would find thousands of English baskets and packages for bringing over indifferent foreign fruit to the English market and to be forced on the consumer as English fruit, thereby robbing English producers of the price they would naturally get for home-grown produce. There was no protection in the proposal of the Bill. It was merely an effort to give the struggling farmers of this country a fair chance, and to allow the consumer to know what he was purchasing. He hoped his hon. Friend would go to a Division, and thus secure him a safe seat for his life.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 110; Noes 210.—(Division List, No. 23.)

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) BILL.—(No. 54.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir **R. TEMPLE** (Surrey, Kingston) said, he begged to move the Second Reading of this Bill. The object of the measure was to substitute for the present arrangement of certificate for proficiency for evening schools a certificate of attendance at school, under Rules framed by the Education Department. That was the object of the Bill which was promoted by the National Union of Elementary Teachers of England and Wales, and therefore supported by the best professional educational opinion in the country. He hoped it would receive, more or less, the countenance and sanction of Her Majesty's Government.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir R. Temple.*)

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): The subject dealt with in this Bill is a most intricate and important one, and I could not accept the Second Reading without a full discussion. To do so would be most unfair to the teachers and to the children. I must object to the Bill being taken at an hour which does not allow of an adequate discussion.

Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 134.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir H. MAXWELL (Wigton) said, he wished to move the Second Reading of this Bill. It differed from the Bill of last year, inasmuch as the Amendment put into that Bill in the other House had been incorporated with it. The present measure contained an alternative—protection of area or protection of species.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir H. Maxwell.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said, he did not object to the Bill, but he thought the Tory Party should agree amongst themselves in regard to their Bills. The House had a right to expect some agreement between the Tory Party in the House of Commons and the Tory Party in the House of Lords. Hon. Members were asked to support the Bill last year, and they did so, but when it reached the House of Lords their Lordships fell on it, and the Amendments they made had to be kicked out subsequently in the House of Commons. If they engaged themselves with the Bill this Session, what security would they have that the Lords would not attack it again, and send it back in a mutilated form? Their Lordships had esoteric views as to wild birds, and the Commons had a right to know what those views were.

Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Friday.

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

Order for Committee [To-morrow] read, and discharged.

Resolved, That it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to communicate this Resolution, and desire their concurrence.—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 96.)

Read a second time, and committed for Wednesday next.

MUSIC AND DANCING LICENCES (MIDDLESEX) BILL.—(No. 26.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (LONDON) BILL. (No. 79.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL. (No. 143.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Tuesday next.

TRUSTEE ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 58.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

PATENT AGENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

(No. 143,)

Read a second time, and committed to the Select Committee on Patent Agents Bill.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) [ADVANCE.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the fund of the suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland under any Act of the present Session to authorise an advance out of the general fund of monies belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE AND EXECUTOR BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Howard Vincent, Bill for the appointment of a Public Trustee and Executor, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Howard Vincent and Mr. Warmington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 154.]

SUNDAY CLOSING (WALES) ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Herbert Roberts, Bill to amend "The Sunday Closing (Wales) Act, 1881," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Herbert Roberts, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Alfred Thomas, and Mr. Bowen Rowlands.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 200.]

FEUS AND BUILDING LEASES (SCOTLAND.)

Ordered, That the Select Committee be re-appointed to inquire into the working of the Law of Scotland relating to Feus and Leases for building, including the casualties payable to the superior, and the conditions frequently inserted in Feu Charters and Leases for Building, and to consider whether any, and, if any, what amendment of the Law is required.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Baird, Mr. J. B. Balfour, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Dalziel, Captain Hope, Sir John Kinloch, Dr. MacGregor, Mr. Maxwell, Sir Charles Pearson, Mr. Renshaw, Mr. Thomas Shaw, Mr. G. A. L. Whitelaw, and Mr. Stephen Williamson.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Second Report brought up, and read.

Report, with Minutes of Evidence, to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

ADJOURNMENT.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) asked what was to be the business to-morrow, and what business it was proposed to take at the Morning Sitting on Friday?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire): In the absence of the Leader of the House, I cannot make a positive statement, but I think the Navy Votes are to be taken to-morrow, and that they are to be followed by the Army (Annual) Bill. If there is then time, the Second Reading of the Equalisation of Rates Bill will be taken. On Friday I think the business will be the introduction of the Registration Bill.

An hon. **MEMBER** asked when the Adjourned Debate on the Standing Committee for Scotch Bills would be resumed?

MR. T. E. ELLIS said, that perhaps the hon. Member would repeat the question to the Leader of the House to-morrow.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) asked at what period of the evening the Army (Annual) Bill would be taken to-morrow? The Government had given a pledge that it would not be taken except at an early hour.

MR. T. E. ELLIS said, he hoped the Navy Votes would be disposed of in good time, so that they might enter upon the Army (Annual) Bill at a reasonable hour.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he supposed that if the Army (Annual) Bill was not reached in good time, it would not be taken to-morrow.

MR. T. E. ELLIS: I cannot say.

Question put, and agreed to.

House adjourned at three minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 12th April 1894.

SAT FIRST.

The Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick, after the death of his father.

QUARTER SESSIONS (MIDSUMMER) BILL.—(No. 4.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: My Lords, I am not rising for the purpose of opposing this Bill in any way. On the contrary, I entirely approve of it. I may say that I brought the Bill before the notice of the Society of Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, of which I happen to be Chairman, and they also express their entire approval. But I wish to make this observation on a point which was raised by them in a discussion upon the Bill, which I think is worthy the attention of the noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor. As I understand it, the periods for the Circuits are settled by Order in Council, but, as we all know, the times for holding Quarter Sessions are fixed by Act of Parliament. Certainly there is no finality in legal arrangements at present; and though this Bill will mainly meet the difficulty about these particular Quarter Sessions, it is believed in certain quarters that there is a probability that at some time or other Orders in Council may be made and other Quarter Sessions will be interfered with. As this Bill is to amend the law on the subject, I think it is worth calling attention to this point in order that the Lord Chancellor may consider once for all whether he will not make the Bill applicable to all Quarter Sessions instead of confining it to those to which the Bill applies; so that if any such Order in Council should be made there may be an Act of Parliament in force to meet the difficulty.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): In answer to the suggestion of the noble Viscount, I will say at once that I shall have no objection to give attention to it. One suggestion made on the matter has been already attended to.

VISCOUNT CROSS: Probably the noble and learned Lord will introduce the necessary Amendment.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

VISCOUNT CROSS: May I ask whether this Bill is to go to Standing Committee?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): It seems to me to be of such a character that it is hardly worth while sending it to Standing Committee, and, therefore, I will put the Amendment now into the Bill.

Standing Committee negatived.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.—(No. 15.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): My Lords, this Bill, as your Lordships are no doubt aware, is for the purpose of giving effect to the Award on what are known as the Behring Sea Seal Fisheries. I do not think I need trouble the House with a very long explanation on the subject; but I think it is right on a Bill of such great importance as this that I should say a few words in explanation. The question which is dealt with by the Award, and by this Bill, arose in 1886, when certain seizures of British vessels were made by United States cruisers in waters forming part of the Behring Sea over which the United States Government claim to exercise jurisdiction in virtue of the Treaty by which Alaska and Islands adjoining it were ceded by Russia to the United States. Upon those seizures of British vessels taking place the then Government—I think Lord Iddesleigh was at the time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—protested against them as not being justifiable. The noble Marquess opposite

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

(Lord Salisbury), who soon afterwards succeeded to the same Office, took up precisely the same ground, and he carried on a correspondence on the subject with the United States Government which lasted a considerable time, and which I may be permitted to say was, in the opinion and belief of everybody, marked with his usual ability and good judgment. The result of the correspondence was that the noble Marquess opposite proposed to the United States Government that the question at issue should be submitted to arbitration, and I must say that I think the noble Marquess deserves great credit for having made that proposal. It is obvious, I think, to everyone that not only on account of the nature of this particular question, which it was most desirable should be settled in a friendly and satisfactory manner as between two nations such as the United States and this country—not only was the arbitration of the utmost value in that regard, but also because it has set an example of how disputes between two great nations can be settled by the peaceful means of a friendly arbitration. To that precedent I must say I attach great and signal importance. In consequence of that proposal, which was agreed to by the United States Government, a body of arbitrators met at Paris. That body of Arbitrators was composed of gentlemen of position and great ability, two of them named by the United States; one was Mr. Justice Harland, I think, and the other a distinguished Member of the Senate, Senator Morgan. There were also Arbitrators named by France, by Italy, and by Sweden—the Baron de Courcelles on the part of France, the Marquis Visconti Venosta on the part of Italy, and M. Gregers Gram, a distinguished jurist, on the part of Sweden—all gentlemen of ability and impartiality, and to their labours we are greatly indebted. On our part we nominated the late Lord Hannen and Sir George Thompson, the Prime Minister of Canada. In mentioning the name of Lord Hannen, I am quite certain I shall express the feeling of every Member of your Lordships' House, as it is the feeling, I believe, of the public generally, in saying that not only have we lost in Lord Hannen the noble and learned Lord who in this particular Arbitration displayed the greatest qualities and gave services of the highest character to his country, but we have lost in him a distinguished Judge than whom of late years none has been more eminent, or displayed more ability in the service of his country. It is a loss to be deplored and not easily replaced. The questions submitted to the Arbitrators may be stated shortly, thus: First, whether the United States were right in contending that they had jurisdiction over this portion of the sea, and also as regarded a question raised by them as to their having a special property in these seals. That was the first and most important question submitted to the Arbitrators; and it is, of course, most satisfactory to this country to find that upon this great question the Arbitrators held that the contention of the noble Marquess, on the part of this country, was justified, and that the United States Government were not right in making the seizures of British vessels of which we had complained. The result of the determination of that point is that the seizures having been declared in principle illegal, the claims of British subjects to compensation will have to be met; and I am able to say that as soon as legislation has taken place in both countries to give effect to the Award, a Convention will be entered into between us and the United States for the consideration and settlement of those claims. The other question which was submitted to the Arbitrators was what should be the nature of the Regulations to be hereafter enforced with regard to these fur seals. The object of those Regulations is one in which all must concur—namely, the preservation of this interesting and useful species from what otherwise threatened them—complete extermination. The Regulations are laid down in the Award, and the object of this Bill is to give effect to them. I ought perhaps to have mentioned first, that in the Award itself, which is, of course, the main document on which all this depends, two principal provisions are made—one, that a zone is established of 60 miles round the Pribyloff Islands, which are part of the territory of the United States to which the seals largely resort. That is determined by this Award as an area within which the capture of seals is entirely prohibited. Then the next Regulation institutes a close time for a large extent of sea extending as low as the 35th parallel of latitude from the 1st of May to the 31st of July, during which the capture and killing of seals is prohibited. There are other limits besides the limit of latitude 35 degrees, but I think I need not trouble your Lordships by a precise definition of them. They are to be found in the Award. Then, as I said before, there are other Regulations laid down, some of which are of importance, but the details of which I need not give. They are in accordance with the Award. Now, the object of this Bill is to give effect to the Award and to the Regulations. Its provisions are of a very simple kind. It is provided that the ships of those who violate the Regulations are subject to seizure by Her Majesty's vessels. I am speaking, of course, of British ships and to the infliction of fine and imprisonment by British Courts to which vessels when captured will be taken. There are some minor Regulations of less importance. It is also provided in the Bill that if the United States are willing, as they will be willing, to grant to Her Majesty's cruisers the right to seize United States vessels contravening the Regulations, a similar power shall be given by us to the officers of the United States to seize British vessels. The Congress of the United States have already passed the necessary legislation, and it only remains for us to complete by passing the necessary legislation upon our part. I have not the smallest doubt that this House will have no hesitation in agreeing to legislation to carry into effect the terms of this Award; and I am satisfied that as it is the intention and strong desire of the United States that this Award shall be carried out fully and completely, so also it is the determination of this country on its part that we shall absolutely and fully fulfil the obligations which the Award imposes upon us. I do not think it is necessary for me to give any further detailed explanations of the Bill. I submit it to your Lordships with great satisfaction, because it is practically the end of a great controversy which has terminated in a manner highly honourable and satisfactory to both nations concerned. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Kimberley.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I need hardly assure your Lordships that our only desire will be that this Bill should pass into law as rapidly as possible. I think we have every reason, on the whole, to congratulate ourselves upon the issue of this controversy, and I most sincerely join with the noble Earl opposite in expressing the greatness of our obligation to the distinguished men who constituted the tribunal, and, I may add, to the distinguished men who represented England on that occasion, to whose efforts and abilities we owe this result, with which, on the whole, we have good reason to be satisfied. And in doing so I cannot but join with the greatest sympathy and feeling in the regret expressed by the noble Earl that we are not able to congratulate here in this House one of our Members who bore a most distinguished part in those proceedings. Lord Hannen was, I believe, a man of no Party. He was a man who fulfilled in the very highest degree that very high ideal, the ideal of a British Judge—a man of extraordinary ability, acumen, and labour; of an impartiality which even under the most thorny circumstances no one was ever found hardy enough to challenge, and of merits so distinguished that whenever a vacancy occurred to which he could be promoted, there was a common assent by all competent men on all sides that he was the man best fitted to fill it. He has left behind him a very distinguished name, and the deep regrets of those who feel that his place will not easily be filled, and that he has been sacrificed in performing a most valuable service to his country. My Lords, for the Award itself I do not think it is desirable to say very much; I do not think it is desirable to discuss in detail, that is to say, an Award of this kind when it has been given. It is a matter of the greatest gratification that we have come to this honourable ending of a serious controversy. For not only would it have been horrible and grotesquely absurd that for such a matter as this two great and kindred nations should have been plunged into all the, what must be, horrors of modern war, but if it was possible to add to the absurdity of a warlike ending, or even an unpeaceful ending to this controversy, it was that unless we come to some agreement the natural species over which we were fighting would have disappeared in the course of our controversy. It was quite certain that unless we came to some agreement the seal species would disappear altogether. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to agree. I think on the main issue we have reason to express our contentment without any diminution or reserve in respect to the Regulations. I do not say they are the Regulations which I myself would have framed in all respects. There are some matters on which questions might be raised; but they are far better not only than a coolness between the two nations, but than the disappearance of the whole seal species; and, at all events, if there are any points in them which are capable of improvement, they will be discovered in the course of experience, and the Award contains provisions which will enable the two nations to obviate any errors or deficiencies which may be found. Under those circumstances, I think it is wholly unnecessary for us to discuss this matter at length, or to interpose any delay in the conclusion of that legislation to which the American Congress has already assented, and which only wants this assent on the part of your Lordships to bring this beneficent Award into operation. I only, therefore, join in the general tribute to the great services of the distinguished man who acted for us on that tribunal, and express the hope that this Bill may speedily pass into law.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: It is not necessary for me to add anything with reference to the subject of the Bill of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. But I may be permitted, perhaps, to express my very warm concurrence in all that fell from the noble Marquess with regard to my eminent friend the late Lord Hannen. Those of us who take part from time to time in the judicial proceedings of this House felt, when he retired, how much we had lost. We still hoped, from time to time, that his strength would enable him to render us invaluable assistance, but it was not to be. He won the respect and admiration of those who knew him and the entire confidence of the legal profession throughout the whole of his career. He won the esteem of all those eminent men with whom he came in contact during the Arbitration which led to this Bill, and the laments which were uttered on the occasion of his death found an echo on the other side of the Atlantic. What has been said of him has been so well said that I need add nothing more; but it is impossible for me, in alluding to the loss we have sustained by the death of Lord Hannen, not to remember that we have since lost also another noble Lord, who was appointed to fill his place, whose appointment gave the greatest satisfaction to us all, and whose services in this House were of the greatest assistance. It is to me an incident which is alike pathetic and melancholy that it has fallen to my lot thus to allude to the loss of these two distinguished Judges. Thirty-four years ago Lord Bowen and I were together pupils in the chambers of Lord Hannen, and we were conscious ever afterwards how much we owed to him. Lord Bowen possessed a combination of qualities seldom found together. He had a profound and an accurate knowledge of the law. His power of analysis was exquisite in its subtlety and acuteness, and was always tempered by breadth of view and great practical common sense which made it eminently useful. He was not only a lawyer, but he was a brilliant scholar, and his literary faculty enabled him to clothe his judgments in words which gave them dignity, force, and point, and which embodied in precise and lucid language the most intricate and complex questions of law. Of his patient industry and uniform courtesy it is needless for me to speak. This is not an occasion for elaborate eulogy; but I am sure your Lordships will pardon my having said thus much. I will only say further that I have been speaking of a valued friend, whose friendship I enjoyed for more than half a lifetime, but my feeling of personal loss is eclipsed by a sense of the loss which this House and the country has unfortunately sustained.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next.

UGANDA.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, you are all aware, probably, that in the other House of Parliament a statement is to be made this evening about Uganda. It is only respectful to this House that a similar statement should be made here, and I think it will be for the convenience of the House that I should read the exact terms in which it will be made in the other House—

> "After considering the late Sir Gerald Portal's Report and weighing the consequences of withdrawal from Uganda on the one hand and on the other of maintaining British interests there, Her Majesty's Government have determined to establish a regular administration, and for that purpose to declare Uganda to be under a British protectorate. The details of the arrangements to be made are under consideration."

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I, of course, hear with great satisfaction the announcement of that intention on the part of Her Majesty's Government. I am afraid the noble Earl will think it is indiscreet curiosity on my part, but will the noble Earl allow me to ask him whether the Government have come to any kind of conclusion with respect to what Sir Gerald Portal declared to be the essential matter without which any other arrangement would be ineffectual—namely, the establishment of communication with the coast? Of course, I am prepared to hear that the matter is still under consideration; but I think the House will feel that, after the publication of that Report expressing the decision of one whose judgment we all respected, and, I may add, whose loss we all deeply deplore—that of Sir Gerald Portal—we can hardly acquiesce in the maintenance for any considerable time of any reserve as to the decision to which the Government may come upon a matter which so high an authority declared to be indispensable to a permanent arrangement.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: I can assure the noble Marquess that it is not the wish or the intention of Her Majesty's Government to maintain reserve on this subject for any considerable time. But, although Sir Gerald Portal no doubt laid down in express terms the importance of making a railway a considerable distance on the way to Uganda, the subject remains one of great complexity from many points of view, notably from the financial point of view, and I would rather not make an announcement on that subject—at any rate, to-night.

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

Message from the Commons, That they have come to the following Resolution—namely, that it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons, and to desire their Lordships' concurrence thereto; the said Message to be taken into consideration To-morrow.

LAND TRANSFER BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to simplify titles and facilitate the transfer of land in England—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 19.)

TRUSTEE ACT, 1893, AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next: (The Lord Ashbourne.) (No. 20.)

House adjourned at Five o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 12th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

HAREWOOD END MAGISTRATES' CLERK.

Mr. BRYNMOR JONES (Gloucester, Stroud): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Justices of the Petty Sessional Division of Harewood End, near Ross, in the County of Hereford, have recently appointed Mr. Arthur Blomfield Morling to be Justices' clerk for that division in place of Mr. Piddocke, solicitor, deceased; is he aware that Mr. A. B. Morling is not a solicitor of the Supreme Court, and will he inquire what were the special circumstances within the meaning of the Statute, 40 & 41 Vic., c. 43, s. 7, which justified the Bench in dispensing with the qualifications for the office of Justices' clerk usually required under that Statute; and whether he is aware that eight duly-qualified solicitors applied for the office?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Yes; but I am informed by the Justices that the special circumstances which, in their opinion, rendered the appointment desirable were that Mr. Morling had for 15 years fulfilled the duties of the situation under the clerk to the Justices, to the entire satisfaction of the Bench.

HER MAJESTY'S MINISTER AT PERU.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Sir Charles Mansfield, Her Majesty's Minister in Peru, has yet recovered sufficiently from his accident to resume the charge of the British Legation, or is it still under Mr. Mallet, Her Majesty's Consul at Panama; and if Her Majesty's Government will bear in mind in the present crisis the vast interests Great Britain has at stake in that Republic, and the fact that the Peruvian Corporation took over the whole of the External Debt of Peru in exchange for the Railways?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I am glad to say that Sir C. Mansfield has recovered from his accident, and has resumed charge of Her Majesty's Legation at Lima. Her Majesty's Government are aware of the important interests which British subjects have at stake in Peru, and are confident that they will receive every attention from Her Majesty's Representative.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' DECORATION.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can now state whether a Volunteer officer, who may shortly receive the new decoration as a Volunteer of 20 years' service, will hereafter be able to receive the Volunteer officer's decoration on the completion of 20 years' service as a Volunteer officer?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The answer is in the affirmative.

THE CANADIAN TEA DUTIES.

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state what the intentions of the Canadian Government are with reference to the alteration of the Tea Duties; whether teas blended in bond in Great Britain will be subject to any and what duty in the new tariff; and whether the Canadian Government can legally differentiate against this country and home labour in favour of China and other tea-exporting countries?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Secretary of State has telegraphed to the Governor General of Canada for full information on the point, and if the hon. Member will repeat his question on Monday I hope then to be in a position to answer it fully.

LONDONDERRY BARRACKS.

MR. ROSS (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will direct that the statutory powers for compulsorily taking land be put into immediate operation, for the purpose of acquiring a site for the new Londonderry Barracks; and when may the building operations be expected to commence?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Steps are being taken for the compulsory purchase of the necessary land; but the process requires some time for its completion. Very little building can take place till the additional land is acquired.

TRALEE AND DINGLE RAILWAY.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Government propose to take any steps for the relief of the cesspayers of West Kerry from the taxation brought upon them by the Tralee and Dingle Railway; and whether any proposal has been made for the reconstruction and further working of the line?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham), (who replied) said: The Treasury has now before it the materials necessary for forming a judgment on the facts, and they are now being considered. I hope shortly to be able to announce the views of the Treasury. My hon. Friend is aware that the Treasury has no *locus standi* for making arrangements for the future working of the line. These are matters for the consideration of the Grand Jury of Kerry, and the Treasury has stated that such arrangements are an essential condition of the Government's assisting in any way the improvement of the line.

THE CAVAN LAND VALUER.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Bomford, who is now acting as valuer for the Land Commission in County Cavan, was formerly agent to a large landlord in the county; that he is related to that landlord and to several other landlords in the county, and to Mr. Barnes, the principal valuer for the landlords in the county in fair rent cases; that he was formerly a member of a Sub-Commission in the county, and removed to another county on account of his close connection with the landed interest there; and whether these facts were known to Mr. Wrench and other members of the Commission when Mr. Bomford was sent as valuer to Cavan?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am in communication with the Land Commission on the subject of this question, and will thank my hon. and learned Friend to defer it until next week.

IRISH DISPENSARY COMMITTEES.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will favourably consider the propriety of reducing the rateable qualification of co-opted members of Dispensary Committees in Ireland to the same figure to which he has already reduced the qualification of the elected Guardians of the Poor Law Boards?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Under the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1851, sec. 7, elective members of the Dispensary Committees must be liable to pay rates in respect of property of the annual value of £30 at least, and legislation will be necessary in order to alter this qualification. I certainly think it anomalous that the qualification of the elective members of a Committee should be fixed at £30, while that of the Guardians, who are *ex officio* members, is only £8, and I am in favour of legislation with a view to dealing with the matter.

THE BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a recent resolution of the Afrikander Bund, asking that British Bechuanaland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate should be incorporated in Cape Colony; whether such incorporation would save the Imperial Exchequer £100,000 a year; whether it has also been called for by residents in Bechuanaland other than the Border Police Force; and whether the Secretary of State will propose to meet the wishes of the Colony by facilitating the incorporation?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The attention of the Secretary of State has been called to the resolution in question; but no action has been taken in regard to it.

THE DINDER CHARITY LANDS.

Mr. C. HOBHOUSE (Wilts, Devizes): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the Trustees of the Dinder Charity Lands, one-half of which come under the provisions of "The Allotments Act, 1882," after having avoided compliance with its provisions by only offering for allotments the portion of the property unsuitable for the purpose, were allowed by the Charity Commissioners without any previous public inquiry to dispose of the greater part of their property by private sale; and whether he can provide some method of controlling the discretion of the Charity Commissioners?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): Notice of their intention to let in allotments one-half of the Charity Land decribed in the questions as unsuitable for the purpose, was given by the Trustees in 1890, without eliciting any applications. In 1892 public notices of a proposed sale of the property were given by advertisement and the other usual modes in the locality. No objections were received, and no request was made for any public inquiry. In these circumstances, the sale was approved by the Commissioners in July of that year. The question of bringing the action of the Charity Commission more directly under the control of Parliament, and of giving it more effectual means of dealing with the business which will come before it, is now under the consideration of a Select Committee of this House.

METROPOLITAN POLICE UNIFORMS.

Mr. E. H. BAYLEY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the propriety of supplying the police with lighter clothing during warm weather, as is done in provincial towns; and will he also consider the propriety of giving the police the money allowing them to supply themselves with boots?

Mr. ASQUITH: I must give my hon. Friend the same reply with regard to the first part of his question as I did in August last—namely, that the question has been frequently under consideration, and that it is the opinion of the Commissioner, after consultation with the chief surgeon of the police, that having regard to the variable nature of the Metropolitan climate, and to all the conditions of the case, it would not be advisable to provide the Metropolitan Police with light clothing during the summer months. With regard to the second part of the question, I understand the matter was carefully gone into in 1887, and the change was not considered advisable. There are difficulties in the way, but I am in consultation with the Commissioner on the subject.

ADMIRALTY CUTLERY CONTRACTS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the cutlery and hardware purchased for Her Majesty's Fleet is examined prior to acceptance by competent experts skilled in the trade, and capable of telling Sheffield workmanship from foreign imitation?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The officers who examine cutlery and hardware for the Fleet and compare them with the patterns are believed to be capable of detecting foreign imitations. Contracts are only entrusted to home manufacturers who make the goods themselves.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: In all these contracts is the Resolution of the House of the 9th February as to wages, &c., strictly observed?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Yes, Sir; it is set out in all contracts.

ARMY CUTLERY CONTRACTS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if the cutlery and hardware purchased for Her Majesty's Army is examined prior to acceptance by competent experts skilled in the trade, and capable of distinguishing good Sheffield work from foreign forgeries?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Woodall, Hanley): Cutlery and hardware for Army services are inspected by artizan experts, who, it is believed, are as capable of distinguishing British from foreign manufacture as any men can be.

IRISH POOR LAW FINANCE.

Mr. ROSS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state how many of the Irish Poor Law Unions are at present in a state of financial embarrassment; in how many Unions have Vice Guardians been appointed; and has he received a Memorial extensively signed by the ratepayers of the Tralee Union, praying him not to dismiss the Vice Guardians?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed by the Local Government Board that the accounts of Poor Law Unions in Ireland for the half-year ended March 25 last have not yet been audited, and that it is not, therefore, possible for them to say what Unions can be regarded as being in the position mentioned. There are no Unions in Ireland at the present time under the management of Vice Guardians. A Memorial was received last year by the Local Government Board asking that the services of the Vice Guardians of the Tralee Union might be retained. These gentlemen were continued in office till March last, and I am informed they could not legally retain their positions for a longer period.

Mr. ROSS: On the Estimates I will call attention to the management of Irish Poor Law Unions.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman, in view of the Debate, consider the advisability of giving us a Return showing the financial position of Irish Poor Law Unions, that especially of

Listowel Union, on which an attack was made the other day? Is it not the fact that the Listowel Guardians have at the present moment £2,000 to their credit at the bank?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): As I put that question may I explain that it was directed at the system of outdoor relief, not at the financial position of the Union.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have not before me the details as to Listowel Union; but in answer to the general question of my hon. Friend, I think the request is a reasonable one, and I will see how it can be granted.

MR. ROBERT BUCKELL, J.P.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the gentleman named Robert Buckell, who has recently been made a Justice of the Peace for the City of Oxford, is the same person as Robert Buckell whose name appears twice in the Schedules to the Report of the Oxford Election Commission, 1881, as having been guility of corrupt practices at the elections in that city in April and May, 1880; and whether he is aware that two Justices of the Peace for the City of Oxford were scheduled by the Commissioners for offences of the same nature as were proved against Mr. Buckell, and were forthwith removed from the bench by the then Lord Chancellor?

Mr. ASQUITH: It is the case that Mr. Buckell, who was recently made a Magistrate, was reported as having been quilty in 1880 of corrupt practices. Since thae time he has been twice in recent years elected Mayor of the city, and as such has acted as Chief Magistrate. His appointment appeared to the Lord Chancellor to be desirable on public grounds, unless the fact of his being scheduled was to be regarded as a bar to the appointment. Having regard to the length of time which has elapsed since the corrupt practices referred to, and to the public services since rendered by Mr. Buckell, and in view of all the circumstances of the case, the Lord Chancellor thought the appointment expedient. It is to be observed that the Corrupt Practices Act now in force renders a person convicted on indictment of a corrupt practice incapable of holding a judicial office only for a term of seven years. The question of appointing a person scheduled by Commissioners must, therefore, in each case be determined on a consideration of all the circumstances. As regards the last paragraph, the only record which the Lord Chancellor has is that two Justices were removed from the Commission of the Peace for the City of Oxford in August, 1881, at their own request.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): May I ask whether this gentleman was a Gladstonian candidate at the General Election?

Mr. ASQUITH: I have not the slightest knowledge on that subject.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS: Is there any doubt whatever that the two gentlemen referred to were removed by the Lord Chancellor in consequence of having been scheduled for practices corresponding to those of which Mr. Buckell has been guilty; also was not Mr. Buckell a member of the Town Council at the time he was scheduled?

Mr. ASQUITH: I have no information on the subject beyond what I have stated.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): Is it the rule to strike off the Commission the names of gentlemen directly they are scheduled, or to wait until they have been convicted on indictment?

Mr. ASQUITH: That is a question which cannot be answered without notice. It is not within my Department.

FEES ON MAGISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS.

Sir J. KINLOCH (Perth, E.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that in certain counties in Scotland it is the custom for the Clerks of the Peace to demand a fee from each Justice on administration of the oath; and if this is a legal charge?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan, &c.): I believe that it is the custom for Clerks of the Peace to charge such a fee, in some counties at least; but, in regard to the legality of such a charge, I cannot add to what was stated by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland in answer to similar questions on July 28, December 12, and Tuesday last.

RAGLAN BARRACKS SEWAGE OUTFALL.

Mr. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether steps have been taken by the War Department to obviate the pollution occasioned to the public bathing place at Devonport by the sewage outfall from the Raglan Barracks?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Provision for this service is made in the present Army Estimates, and the work will be commenced as soon as possible.

DUBLIN UNION PRECEPTS.

Mr. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the form of precept annually issued by the Clerk of the Peace to the clerks of the Dublin Unions has this year been altered by striking out so much of paragraph 2 as related to objections to the names of inhabitant occupiers; and if he will state by what authority, or under what circumstances, this alteration came to be made?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The form of precept was amended by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, in pursuance of the powers given him by the Parliamentary Registration (Ireland) Act, 1885, Section 8. The amendment was considered necessary in order to draw the attention of the clerks of Unions and other officers to the rights of rated occupiers and householders who had occupied different premises of the requisite value in immediate succession during the 12 months preceding the 20th July in each year. In some of the forms hitherto used in Ireland—namely, in relation to the supplemental list of householders and in the form of precept for boroughs, there was no reference made to the rights acquired by occupation of premises in immediate succession. This omission appears to have led to injustice in the case of such classes of voters. In the corresponding English forms there had not been any such omission. The note at foot of amended form is in the same terms as in the form No. 1 in the Schedule to the Statute, directing the paragraphs as to the existing Register to be modified by making them apply, so far as regards the marginal additions "objected" or "dead," to householders in the then existing Register.

PORTADOWN POST OFFICE.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when it is proposed to commence the building of the new post office at Portadown?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): This is a matter which is under the control of the Board of Public Works in Ireland, and I am informed that no provision for building the new post office at Portadown has been made in the Estimates for the current financial year. Consequently, the work cannot be begun until next year.

CIVIL SERVICE SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

Mr. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, in view of the fact that the annual increments of salary of Second Division clerks in the Civil Service are so regulated as to provide for those clerks reaching a certain maximum of £190 per annum after 19 years' service, and of the fact that the annual increments of the new class of assistant clerks have been so regulated as to necessitate a service of 28 years before the attainment of the maximum of £150 per annum, whether, having regard to the ages of the men constituting this class, he will consider the advisability of adjusting the annual increments of salary so as to enable these clerks to attain their maximum at an earlier period of life?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: As £190 is far below the maximum salary of the Second Division, there is no parallel between the cases quoted. The scale of salary of assistant clerks or abstracters was fixed after careful consideration with reference to the nature of their duties, and I cannot see any reason for reconsidering it.

SICK LEAVE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any complaints have reached him of the insufficiency of the amount of sick leave on full pay allowed in any one year to the new class of assistant clerks—namely, six weeks less the amount of holiday leave which may already have been taken; and whether he has any objection to allowing responsible Heads of Departments to exercise discretionary powers in such cases within the limits of sick leave allowed to all other classes of clerks in the Civil Service?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Two representations from assistant or supplementary clerks respecting sick leave have been transmitted to the Treasury. All officers so classed were formerly temporary copyists, who were as such entitled to a maximum absence of 28 working days for ordinary leave and sick leave combined. On the promotion of temporary copyists to abstractorships, supplementary or assistant clerkships, their maximum of absence has been increased from 28 to 36 days in Departments under the control of the Treasury, and this appears to me a reasonable arrangement.

ASSISTANT CLERKS IN THE COLONIAL AND INDIA OFFICES.

Mr. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury under what circumstances and for what reasons were the initial salaries of assistant clerks in the Colonial and India Offices calculated on a different basis from those of other assistant clerks in other Offices whose status was in every respect identical with theirs; and what number of recommendations have been received by the Treasury from Heads of Departments for the promotion of meritorious assistant clerks to the Second Division, and how many of these recommendations have been acceded to?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The organisation of the India Office is not subject to the Regulations governing the ordinary Civil Service, and is, therefore, not within my province. The case of the Colonial Office was an exceptional one, in that the action taken was the only means by which a desirable and economical reorganisation in one of their subordinate Departments could be effected. There is no ground for reopening the settlement in other Departments. As I stated last year, the Second Division is recruited by open competition, and it is not proposed to admit to it men who have only passed the rudimentary examination required of temporary copyists. Proposals for the appointment of assistant clerks to the Second Division have, therefore, not been entertained.

NEW ADMIRALTY BUILDINGS.

Mr. BARTLEY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that all the large rooms on one side of the new Admiralty buildings on the ground, first, second, and third floors, which were specially designed as large rooms on the recommendation of a Committee of this House to promote the efficiency of the Public Service, have been made into small rooms as shown on the revised plans just put into the Tea Room; whether he can state how many small rooms have been substituted for large rooms, and who are to occupy these small rooms; what has been the cost of the alterations; why these alterations have been made without the authority of Parliament; and whether the Government propose to set aside the strong recommendation of the Committee which urged in the interests of the efficient conduct of the Public Service that in all future buildings for Public Offices arrangements should be made for the staff to work collectively in large rooms rather than singly in small rooms?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. H. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): The plans exhibited in the Tea Room show the changes that have been made on the first draft exhibited in 1888, and a comparison between the two sets of plans will show that (excluding the sub-ground floor, which is practically an addition since 1888) the number of rooms in the plans of 1888 was 112, as against 134 in the present plans—an increase of 22, or one in five. The appropriation of the various rooms can be indicated on the plans if desired. The cost of the change may be taken at £12,000. The change is one of executive detail, on which it would hardly be possible to refer to Parliament for authority. There is no intention on the part of the Government to set aside the recommendation of the Committee of 1887. The Admiralty is divided into 20 different departments, and the usefulness of large rooms is consequently restricted. It is in the accounting branch that the large rooms will be most serviceable, and they will be provided in the north block.

CLONMEEN NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Canon Morrissey, P.P., Banteer, County Cork, complained to the Commissioners of Education in July, 1891, of the insanitary condition of the out-offices attached to the Clonmeen National Schools; that the Commissioners referred the matter to the Board of Works, who sent plans and specifications to the very reverend manager; that the latter objected to the plans on the ground that closets were to be erected on a site most objectionable from a sanitary point of view; and that the sanitary officer, Dr. O'Leary, condemned the proposed site as most objectionable and insanitary; and whether, in view of the fact that a large number of children are attending these schools, proper plans will be prepared so as to comply with the sanitary requirements of the place?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The facts are substantially as stated in the first paragraph of the question. The site of the out-offices proposed by the Board of Works is 49 feet distant from the school. The proposal of the manager is to build two distinct out-offices, one 57 feet and the other 194 feet from the school; but the latter scheme would involve considerable additional expenditure on dividing walls to which the Board are unable to consent, having regard to the safe character of the site proposed by them. Pending the erection of new offices, the Board have given special directions for the cleaning and maintenance of those now in use.

PATENT FEES.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the total value of forfeited fees accruing to the Patent Office between the 1st July, 1852, and the 31st December, 1893, from the refusal of applications for patents, and from the voiding of patents by renewal fees and other causes before their full term; and will he also state the total number of applications for patents refused, the total number of patents voided under their full time, and the average lifetime of patents during the time named?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): The number of applications refused by the Law Officers between 1st July, 1852, and 31st December, 1883, cannot be given, no record of such refusals having been kept. The number refused by the Comptroller of Patents between 1st January, 1884, and 31st December, 1893, was only 146, and the value of the fees accruing to the Patent Office therefrom about £500. The number of patents voided, at one stage or another, through non-payment of renewal fees between 1st July, 1852, and 31st December, 1893, was 121,242, but no fees accrued to the Patent Office by reason of their expiry. The average life of a patent during the period named was about five years.

RICHMOND LUNATIC ASYLUM, DUBLIN.

Mr. W. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the want of proper accommodation for inmates at the Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Dublin, the public asylum for the City and County of Dublin and the Counties of Wicklow and Louth; if he is aware that the inmates number about 1,500, while there is proper accommodation for only 1,000; whether steps have been taken to acquire a site for an auxiliary asylum at Malahide, in the County of Dublin, and for the erection of the necessary buildings; and if he can state when the works will be commenced, and the present congested state of Richmond Asylum relieved?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The reply to each of the first three paragraphs of the question of the hon. and learned Gentleman is in the affirmative. With regard to the concluding paragraph, I understand that the apportionment of the expenditure necessary for providing additional asylum accommodation at Malahide will come before a special meeting of the Privy Council convened for to-day. When a decision on this question shall have been arrived at, no unnecessary delay will take place in the commencement of the works.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I wish to ask whether the proposed scheme will create any extra charge upon the

County of Louth, and whether the Chief Secretary has received any complaints or remonstrances from the Grand Jury of the County of Wicklow respecting the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The matter has been brought before my notice by both the Counties of Louth and Wicklow, and is receiving my most careful attention.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will not this scheme involve a heavy extra charge on Louth?

MR. J. MORLEY: I must ask for notice of that question.

ORANGE DISTURBANCES IN COUNTY ANTRIM.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a report in *The Irish News* of the 6th instant, of a meeting of Presbyterian and Unitarian farmers, held in the Presbyterian Lecture Hall at Ballymore, County Antrim, on the 5th instant, from which it appears that two Orange bands paraded round the hall, and an Orange mob threw stones which smashed the windows of the hall during the meeting; that two ministers, the Rev. Mr. Armour and the Rev. Mr. Lyttle, were stoned as they left the meeting; and that the mob had so completely taken possession of Ballymore that an extra detachment of police had to be sent there from Larne; and whether he will make inquiry into the matter, and take steps in the future to protect Protestant farmers, in lawful meeting assembled in County Antrim, from such unprovoked attacks by Orange mobs?

MR. J. MORLEY: It appears that one band, and not two, accompanied by a crowd, paraded the village on the occasion referred to, and that four small panes of glass, valued at a couple of shillings, were broken in the lecture hall. The police state that neither of the clergymen named was stoned as alleged, and that it is not the fact that the crowd were at any time in possession of the village. Fearing that some disturbance might ensue on the breaking up of the meeting, the sergeant of police sent to Larne for assistance, but before the arrival of the men the crowd had dispersed and the meeting had broken up quietly.

MR. ROSS: May I ask whether, as a fact, any Protestant meetings had been broken up at Ballymore at all; and whether the right hon. Gentleman will make any inquiries as to the truth of the statements of illusage made by the two rev. gentlemen? I wish also for information as to any statements the right hon. Gentleman has received from the police on the matter, and also whether any arrests have been made, and whether he will give the police any instructions as to their duty in making arrests?

MR. J. MORLEY: If the hon. Member has received any communication from persons assaulted, I will certainly cause inquiry to be made.

MR. M'CARTAN: Was not the meeting composed exclusively of Protestant farmers?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer that.

MR. SEXTON: I am sorry to intrude, but I hold a letter in my hand from one of the rev. gentlemen who was stoned. There can be no doubt as to the truth of the allegation, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will inquire into the matter.

MR. J. MORLEY: After being informed of the communication that has been received by the hon. Member from the rev. gentleman, I will have full inquiries made into the circumstances of the case. I cannot, of course, give the police any special instructions to make arrests, which can be acted on by them generally.

MR. SEXTON: Am I correct in thinking that the mob marched through the streets throwing stones, and that the police have made no arrest?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer that question offhand, nor can I say whether the police have exceeded their duty on that occasion or otherwise.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether any arrests have been made of the parties who stoned the Protestant preachers at Cork?

[No reply was given.]

THE "COSTA RICA PACKET."

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Foreign Office has received an intimation from the Netherlands Government that they will not grant any compensation in the *Costa Rica Packet* case, either for the imprisonment of Captain Carpenter in 1891 or the detention of the ship and crew at Ternate; and whether he will lay the Papers in the case before the House?

*SIR E. GREY: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, but the decision of the Netherlands Government has not been accepted as final. A reply to it is now under consideration, and the Correspondence is, therefore, not ready to be laid before Parliament.

SIR C. CAMERON: Will the Government consider the propriety of suggesting arbitration in this case?

SIR E. GREY: I hope the difficulty may be settled without resort to that.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON SECONDARY EDUCATION.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the widespread dissatisfaction which has been aroused amongst proprietors of private schools owing to the entire exclusion from the Royal Commission upon Secondary Education of any representation whatsoever of the important interests with which they are associated; and whether the Government contemplate taking any steps towards rectifying the omission complained of?

MR. ACLAND: This question, as well as that of the representation of many other interests which desired to be represented, was very carefully considered before the Commission was appointed. I had hoped that the appointment of a member of the Council of the Girls' Public Day School Company, which is on the footing of a private enterprise, and of a Vice President of the College of Preceptors, which is so closely connected with many private schools, would have given satisfaction. The Commission is already a large one, and it is impossible to increase its size.

SIR W. HART-DYKE (Kent, Dartford): I am sorry to press this matter, but I wish to know, in the interests of the Commission itself, whether it is probable that the reply of this Commission will meet with anything like public confidence when such a very large and influential body as the great mass of private teachers has been absolutely excluded from any representation on the Commission? I also desire to know whether it will not be better, considering the widespread feelings of dissatisfaction which have been expressed on this subject, to stretch a point and re-model the Commission in order to secure a more direct representation of the private schools? And I submit that such a step is not without precedent and that the new Commission will not require to sit for any very long period.

MR. ACLAND: I must demur to the use of the words "entire exclusion." I repeat that a Private Company, unassisted by the State and closely connected with girls' education in various parts of the country, is represented on the Commission. The number of interests represented on the Commission is already enormous, and under the circumstances the representation on behalf of private schools is as large as the Government are able to give.

MR. BARTLEY: Is it not a fact that the Public Day Schools Company—of which I am a director—is not in any sense in the same capacity as a private adventure school?

MR. ACLAND: It pays 5 per cent. regularly, and receives no assistance from the State.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that those persons most intimately connected with the interests of private schools distinctly repudiate any confidence in the present Commission?

*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): Is it not the case that the Girls' Public Day School Company paid no dividend for some years after it was started?

MR. ACLAND: I have been a shareholder in that Company for some time, and I have always received some dividends.

MR. J. LOWTHER: I will call attention to this matter on the Estimates.

SPENCER DOCK, DUBLIN.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade is he aware of the fact that no provision is made at the Spencer Dock, Dublin, by the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland for the reception of goods in course of transmission by the Royal Canal; whether, within the past five weeks or so, notices have been served on the boat-owners by the Railway Company, cautioning them not to store any goods in an old shed which had hitherto been used as a temporary shelter for the property of the traders; and whether he will take any steps to compel the Railway Company to provide suitable storage accommodation for the protection of goods going by the canal?

MR. MUNDELLA: I have communicated with the Railway Company, and they inform me that they

"Are not carriers on the Royal Canal, but only toll-takers, and do not provide storage for by-traders, and are under no obligation to do so. Provision does exist, and is used, at Spencer Dock for forwarding and receiving goods transmitted by canal. A by-trader recently used without permission a shed which is required by the Company for railway purposes, and was requested not again to do so."

SOPLEY BRITISH SCHOOL.

MR. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he intends to give a grant to the British School, Sopley, near Ringwood, for the year just closing, as, in the event of no grant being given, the school will be closed at the end of the month, as notified to the Department by letter on the 9th of January, 1894?

MR. ACLAND: The annual inspection of this school does not take place till next month. Until it has been inspected, and the Inspector's Report considered, it is impossible to answer the hon. Member's question. Should the school be closed before it has been inspected, no grant can, of course, be paid, but I presume it will be kept open till the inspection.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE STRABANE UNION.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether, after the rejection by the Strabane Board of Guardians of a scheme for the erection of labourers' cottages in the East Urney Electoral Division, the Local Government Board directed their Inspector, Mr. Kelly, to report on the state of the labourers' dwellings in that Division; (2) whether the Inspector made a house-to-house inspection of the dwellings of the men who had made the original application; (3) whether the Inspector condemned any, and, if so, how many of the houses in that Division as unfit for human habitation, and recommended the erection of new houses in their stead; (4) what length of time has now elapsed since the Local Government Board Inspector's Report was submitted to the Guardians, and whether they have given effect to it; and (5) whether the Local Government Board have any power in the matter to enforce the recommendations of their Inspector, and what they intend to do?

MR. J. MORLEY: The answer to Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this question is in the affirmative. (3.) The Inspector considered that 12 houses were unfit for human habitation, and recommended that a like number of new houses should be provided by the Guardians. (4.) The Report was communicated to the Guardians on the 18th December last, but the Guardians have not taken any steps to give effect to it. (5.) The Local Government Board have power to direct their Inspector under these circumstances to prepare and carry out a scheme for the erection of the labourers' cottages which he recommends, and the matter is now engaging my attention.

MR. KILBRIDE: Are the Nationalist or the Conservative Guardians in a majority in this Union?

MR. J. MORLEY; I am not in possession of that information.

SENTENCES ON INDIAN SESSIONS JUDGES.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if his attention has been called to a decision of Justices O'Kenealy and Hill, in the Calcutta High Court last month, on appeal, reversing a sentence of death upon a young lad 10 years of age by the Sessions Judge of Bhagulpore, on the ground of defective evidence, the Judges in their judgment expressing surprise that simple facts appeared to have entirely escaped the Sessions Judge of Bhagulpore; if his attention has been directed to the strong comments of *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Hindu*, and other Indian newspapers, with regard to the frequent reversals on appeal by the various High Courts of decisions by Sessions Judges who have passed severe sentences of death and penal servitude for life—notably in the recent murder trials at Balladhun, Noakhali, and Benares; and if his attention has also been drawn to the almost universally hostile comments of the Indian Press on decisions by District Sessions Judges where Europeans have been charged with murder, especially in the recent trials known as the Dum-Dum, Fulta, and Guntakul cases; and if so, will he consider the desirability of appointing a small Commission of High Court Judges, or other experts in Indian Criminal Law, to inquire into and report upon the administration of Criminal Law in India?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I have no information with respect to the Bhagulpore case referred to in the first part of my hon. Friend's question. I am aware that there have been strong comments made upon the Balladhun case; and as I have already informed my hon. Friend, the fullest inquiry has been instituted. I have no reason to doubt my hon. Friend's statement as to articles which may have appeared with respect to the other two cases referred to in the second part of the question. With regard to the three cases to which he refers in the third part of his question, I must draw his attention to the fact that not one of these cases was tried by any Sessions Judge. The Dum-Dum case was tried before a Judge of the Calcutta High Court and a Calcutta jury in the first instance, but was ultimately adjudicated by a full Bench of the High Court, headed by the Chief Justice. The Fulta case was dismissed by the Chief Justice of Bengal. The Guntakul case was tried before the Chief Justice of Madras. In these circumstances, I see no necessity for appointing such a Commission as my hon. Friend has suggested.

MR. CAINE: I beg to give notice that I shall take the earliest opportunity of bringing this matter under the notice of the House.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE INDIAN POLICE FORCE.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if an examination is ordered to be held in London some time in June next for the selection of seven candidates for appointment on probation as Assistant Superintendents in the Indian Police Force; and, if so, will he, in view of the embarrassed condition of Indian finance, cancel this Order, and instruct the examination of an equal number of Indians in their own country to fill these vacancies, getting the cost on a silver instead of a gold basis?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: An examination will be held in London in June next for the selection of seven Assistant Superintendents for the Indian Police. This Force is already mainly composed of natives of India, but the Government of India, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission, decided that a proportion of the superintending staff should be recruited in England.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): Will the gentleman appointed be allowed compensation for the fall in exchange?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I cannot answer that without notice.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the equity of making such an allowance?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I assume that these seven gentlemen will be placed on the same footing as other Assistant Superintendents.

NEWSPAPER POSTAGE IN INDIA.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if it is true that certain Anglo-Indian papers, *e.g. The Englishman* and the *Pioneer*, are not charged extra postage when exceeding 10 tolas in weight; that this exemption is specific with regard to these papers, and that Indian papers of equal or greater circulation are denied this exemption?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I have no information on the subject of my hon. Friend's question beyond that which is given in the Indian *Postal Guide*. From this it appears that certain privileges are allowed to all newspapers on which the postage is prepaid according to regulations, an extra half-anna being charged when the weight exceeds 10 tolas.

MR. CAINE: Will the Secretary of State make some inquiry? If he does, I think he will find that he is wrong and I am right.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I have made inquiry, and communicated the result to my hon. Friend.

Mr. CAINE: The right hon. Gentleman has looked at the *Postal Guide*, but I do not gather he has made inquiry.

THE FULTA SHOOTING CASE.

Mr. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if his attention has been called to a recent trial in Bengal, known as the Fulta shooting case, in which a charge of murder against an Army surgeon was dismissed by the District Sessions Judge on the ground that the witnesses had committed perjury; and, if so, will he order that these witnesses shall be prosecuted?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: The Fulta case was not dismissed by a Sessions Judge, but by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta on the application of the prosecuting counsel. The prosecution, or otherwise, of the witnesses for perjury is a matter which may, in my opinion, be safely left in the hands of the authorities in India.

LONDON AND DUBLIN MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when he will give notice to the present contractors for the mail service between London and Dublin that the present contract will be terminated in September, 1895, and when he will send out specifications for new contracts; and whether he will take care that the new contracts will provide that the whole journey shall be performed in two hours less than under the present arrangement; that the route shall be *viâ* Kingstown; and that the new boats shall be of sufficient draught of water to ensure the greatest possible stability as well as the requisite speed, bearing in mind the existing Treasury Minute, issued in 1855, that they shall be large and commodious, ensuring the greatest comfort, convenience, and speed, so as to keep up the service to the highest point of perfection which any improvements may render practicable?

***Mr. A. MORLEY**: This important subject is receiving most careful consideration, but I am not at present able to give the hon. Member any pledge in regard to it. I may, however, take this opportunity of pointing out that under any proposed scheme it would be impossible to provide for the whole journey between London and Dublin being performed in two hours less time than at present.

Mr. CLANCY: Why is it not possible?

***Mr. A. MORLEY**: There appears to be an impression that an hour can be saved on the land journey and an hour on the sea passage. As a matter of fact, this mail train between London and Holyhead travels now at the rate of 43·12 miles an hour, a pace which, as compared with the Scotch and other mail trains, leaves very little scope for accelerating.

MIXED TRAINS BETWEEN DUBLIN AND DROGHEDA.

Mr. CLANCY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, with reference to his refusal to allow the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland to run a mixed train from Drogheda and Balbriggan to Dublin, whether he will reconsider that refusal in view of the fact that a mixed train such as is now asked for was run for many years between the places mentioned without a single accident, that the Railway Company are willing to revert to the old arrangement, and that the public of Balbriggan and Drogheda are greatly inconvenienced without any compensating advantage by the action of the Board of Trade in compelling the abandonment of that arrangement?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have answered a similar question put to me by the hon. Member on a previous occasion. The Railway Regulation Act, 1889, entirely altered the position of affairs by imposing on the Board of Trade responsibility in the interest of public safety which did not exist before that date. I have under my consideration the difficult question of mixed trains on Irish railways, but I must impress upon the hon. Member that those who are interested in the locality should rather urge the Railway Company to afford necessary facilities than press the Board of Trade to assume the responsibility for a relaxation of their Rules.

***Mr. CLANCY**: Was not the prohibition of mixed trains intended to apply to England, where traffic was heavy and where accidents with them were numerous, and not for Ireland, where the traffic is light and the accidents are few?

And are not mixed trains still allowed in Wales? Does not this decision augment the delay in railway communication?

Mr. MUNDELLA: We are anxious to meet the wishes of any locality as far as possible, but I do not think it would be safe to withdraw this prohibition.

ALLOTMENTS.

Mr. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, referring to his answer on the 12th of December last, he will now grant a Return of the number of allotments under one acre detached from cottages, in continuation of the Return obtained for the Board of Agriculture, and dated the 18th of July, 1890?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. Gardner, Essex, Saffron Walden): I have been happy to give the suggestion of the hon. Member further consideration, and the conclusion at which I have arrived is that, although I should not be justified in asking the Treasury to provide the somewhat considerable sum which the preparation of the proposed Return entails during the present financial year, I might fairly do so when the Estimates for 1895 are under consideration. A full quinquennial period will then have elapsed since the last Return was made, which is of advantage from a statistical point of view, and we shall, I hope, be in a position to give the information in a somewhat improved form.

EXTRA POLICE IN WEXFORD COUNTY.

Mr. THOMAS HEALY (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland the number of extra police in the County Wexford at present?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The extra force of the County Wexford at present consists of 18 men. The strength of this force was reduced by seven men in February last.

Mr. THOMAS HEALY: What is the cost per man?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say without notice.

RETURN OF NEW COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will take steps to have presented the Return, ordered on the 12th of January, 1894, showing the County Magistrates appointed since the Resolution of this House of the 5th May, 1893?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am informed that the Return is ready so far as the names are concerned, but it has never been the practice to record in the Crown Office the occupations or addresses of the Magistrates appointed. The particulars have, therefore, to be extracted from a vast heap of correspondence. The Magistrates are often described as living in a district of considerable extent, which, though quite sufficient for the purpose of identification, can scarcely be said to be the address of the Magistrates which the Return requires. This necessitates inquiries in many counties for further information. The work is being pushed on as quickly as possible, and it is hoped that the Return may be laid on the Table by the end of the month.

Mr. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): May I ask whether the Return will show, in the case of Magistrates appointed in Lancashire, whether they resided in the county or boroughs, and whether they are properly qualified by residence to act?

Mr. ASQUITH: That was not included in the scope of the Return as ordered by this House.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the best description he can of the addresses and the occupations?

Mr. ASQUITH: The hon. Member must take the Return one way or the other.

CONVERSION OF MARTINI RIFLES.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an order for the conversion of 27,000 Martini rifles has recently been placed at Enfield; if so, will he state when the jigs, gauges, cutters, and other special tools for the proposed conversion will be finished; whether a large number of the workmen are idle or only partially employed until these special tools are ready; and whether in future the War Office, when issuing orders to the Ordnance Factory, will consider the desirability of allowing time to get the necessary special tools ready for the piece-workers, so that they may not remain thus unemployed?

Mr. WOODALL (who replied) said: The order for converting 27,000 Martini rifles into carbines has been placed at Enfield, and about six weeks will be occupied in the preparation of the gauges and special tools required. Changes of this kind, unfortunately, necessitate a temporary suspension of employment, but in this particular instance arrangements have been made by which other work will be found for the men now suspended or only partially employed.

**Mr. WEIR*: The hon. Gentleman has not answered the last paragraph of my question.

Mr. WOODALL: Yes, Sir. Of course, it is our desire to expedite the preparation of tools as much as possible, so that the men may not long be unemployed.

THE MAGAZINE RIFLE.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an order for 15,000 or 20,000 Lee-Metford magazine rifles, Mark 2, was recently placed at Sparkbrook; if so, will he state why the order was placed at Sparkbrook instead of at Enfield, seeing that the cost per rifle at Sparkbrook is 2s. 9¾d. more than at Enfield?

Mr. WOODALL (who replied) said: In answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough, I stated on Thursday last that 15,000 rifles required by the Admiralty during the current year had been allocated to Sparkbrook. The hon. Member himself was informed on Monday that the cost per rifle at either factory depends on the quantity produced, and that, while in the years ending March, 1891 and 1893, the cost of production was lowest at Enfield, in the intervening year the advantage was on the side of Sparkbrook.

***Mr. WEIR**: Surely when the hon. Gentleman placed the order he could not have been aware that there was a difference in the cost in favour of Enfield of, roughly speaking, 3s. a rifle?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Seeing that considerable pressure has been put on the Government by the right hon. Members for Bordesley and West Birmingham with respect to Sparkbrook, will the hon. Gentleman have any objection to grant a Return showing the relative cost of making these rifles at Sparkbrook and Enfield?

Mr. WOODALL: The hon. Member will in due course of time find the relative cost in the Papers laid before the House.

FOG SIGNAL ON MEW ISLAND.

Mr. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, considering the frequent complaints made by the masters of ships and steamers as to the insufficiency of the fog signal on Mew Island, at the entrance to Belfast Lough, where there is such a considerable amount of shipping, anything has yet been done with the view of meeting the requirements of the place; and whether telegraphic or telephonic communication has yet been established between Mew Island and Donaghadee?

Mr. MUNDELLA: As already intimated in my reply to the hon. Member on the 14th of November last, the Commissioners of Irish Lights are engaged in experiments with the view to the improvement of fog sirens, including that at Mew Island. Since the date of that reply the Board of Trade have sanctioned further expenditure for improving the siren at Mew Island Lighthouse. Telegraphic or telephonic communication has not been established between Mew Island and Donaghadee.

ARMENIAN TROUBLES.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is able to give any further information with regard to recent occurrences at Sivas and at Yuzgat; and whether, in view of widespread anxiety felt by the Armenians and their friends in the United Kingdom respecting the fate of the Armenian prisoners in Turkey who are awaiting trial, Her Majesty's Government will give an assurance that the forthcoming trials of Armenian Christians on charges of alleged sedition at Yuzgat and Sivas shall be attended by competent Consular officers?

***Sir E. GREY**: Her Majesty's Government have been informed that there are a number of political prisoners at Sivas, who are being gradually brought to trial. Her Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* called the attention of the Grand Vizier two months ago to their long detention in prison. As regards Yuzgat, Her Majesty's Ambassador did not consider it expedient to send a Consular Officer to attend the sittings of the Special Commission there. But constant Reports are received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora as to the proceedings. We are informed that the Vali and the Commissioners sent to investigate these disturbances released a number of prisoners on their arrival at Yuzgat, but that 17 Armenians had been condemned to various long terms of imprisonment for participation in the disturbances, and had been sent to Sinope. Her Majesty's Consul telegraphed on the 9th instant to Her Majesty's Embassy that 15 Armenians had been condemned to death by the Special Commission at Yuzgat, and that the sentences were being referred to Constantinople for confirmation. Her Majesty's Ambassador has, however, received an assurance from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that these sentences will be carefully considered at Constantinople before authority is given to carry them out.

HOME PRODUCED FLOUR FOR THE TROOPS.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will insert in the tender forms about to be issued for Ireland a similar clause to that inserted for the commissary batteries at Aldershot, Shorncliffe, &c., in England, that tenders would be only accepted from millers, thereby ensuring the supply of home manufactured flour?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The forms for the next contracts for flour in Ireland have already gone out, but the suggestion shall be considered for future occasions.

Mr. FIELD: Are we to understand the tenders in Ireland are different to those issued for England?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: There is a certain form used in Ireland and a certain form in use in England, and as the forms have now gone out we cannot see our way to amend them this year.

Mr. FIELD: Why should not the forms be alike?

[No answer was given.]

THE WHITE FATHERS OF UGANDA.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why the Uganda Papers just issued contain no reference to the question of the compensation claimed by the White Fathers for the destruction of their property by Captain Lugard; whether the British Government admitted in principle to the French Government the right of these missionaries to compensation in event of the complaint they made being well founded; was Sir Gerald Portal or any officer charged with any instructions to inquire into the subject; if so, why are the Despatches silent thereon; do any further Despatches on this subject exist; and, if so, will they be circulated; and whether, as Sir Gerald Portal admits (page 16) that the Catholics were defeated by the troops of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and driven into Buddu, Her Majesty's Government have arrived at any conclusion as to the justice of the French missionaries' claim to compensation and the amount thereof?

***Sir E. GREY**: Sir Gerald Portal's instructions contained no reference to the question of compensation claimed by the Catholic Fathers for the destruction of the property of their mission. His Despatches, therefore, do not deal with the subject, nor did he make any inquiry with regard to it. This question of compensation is now being discussed with the French Government in a friendly spirit, and I can, therefore, make no further statement about it at present.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: My question referred to instructions given to any officer, and not Sir G. Portal alone. Did Captain Williams have any instructions?

Sir E. GREY: We have received some information on the question of the claim, but it cannot be regarded as finally disposing of the questions either of fact or of principle. The Government, however, desire that a complaint of this kind should be dealt with in a generous spirit, and it is in that spirit that it is being discussed with the French Government.

CANADA AND THE BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION BILL.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can now lay before the House the actual terms in which the Agreement of the Candian Government to the Behring Sea Arbitration Award Bill was conveyed; and whether any condition was attached by the Canadian Government to that Agreement regarding compensation to Canadian sealers?

Mr. S. BUXTON: As regards the first question, the Foreign Office will at the proper time decide what correspondence can be given. As regards the second question, the Canadian Government have attached considerable importance to the question of compensation for the illegal seizures made in past years. But in regard to this matter, the United States Government have intimated that as soon as the legislation for enforcing the Award has been completed they will be prepared to enter into a Convention with Her Majesty's Government providing for the assessment and settlement of the British claims. I would desire to add, in reference to this matter, that the answer I gave to the hon. Gentleman on Thursday last, in reply to a somewhat similar question, was misreported.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Will the hon. Gentleman try and give me something like an answer to the last paragraph of the question? I wish to know if the Canadian Government attached any conditions as to compensation before entering into the Agreement?

Mr. S. BUXTON: They attach considerable importance to the matter, which is now being carefully considered.

THE NAVY AND THE PUBLIC PRESS.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether Article 682 of the Queen's Regulations, which forbids all persons belonging to the Fleet from writing for any newspaper on subjects connected with the Naval Service, or from publishing or causing to be published directly or indirectly in a newspaper or other periodical any matter or thing relating to the Public Service, is held to apply to the reading of papers at the United Service Institution; whether this Article is applied always and without exception to all persons belonging to the Fleet, or to some of such persons only and not to others; and, if so, on what grounds are exceptions made; and whether the Admiralty claim and exercise a dispensing power with regard to all the Articles of the Queen's Regulations, or with regard to some of them only; and, if so, with regard to which?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The Article, if strictly interpreted, debars officers on full pay from lecturing on subjects connected with the Naval Service. While the Admiralty do not, as a general rule, sanction departures from the Regulations by those who are subject to them, applications to read papers at the United Service Institution are considered on their merits, and would be granted when, in the exercise of their discretion, the Admiralty are of opinion that such a relaxation of the Rule is for the advantage of the Public Service.

***Mr. GIBSON BOWLES**: Is the right hon. Baronet aware of a statement made by the Admiralty that they could not sanction any departure from the Regulation?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: As I made the statement myself I am aware of it. I have just stated under what circumstances the Admiralty would allow, in the public interest, such papers to be read.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Then does the right hon. Baronet appreciate the absolute contradiction between his two answers?

[No answer was given.]

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN PENSIONS.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the case of Peter Corcoran, who enlisted in the 56th Foot on the 17th of March, 1847, served in the trenches before Sebastopol, and assisted in the final assault and capture of the fortress, for which services he received medal and clasp; also served in India during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1860, when he lost his leg from the severity of the military service re-acting on his general health; is he aware that, though this man obtained the good-conduct badge, and was discharged with a good character, he was only allowed a pension of 9d. a day; that Corcoran is prevented by disablement and broken health from doing anything to supplement his pension by his own exertions; and that he is now living in absolute destitution in the County of Roscommon; and will he kindly again urge the matter on the favourable consideration of the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, with the view of obtaining for Corcoran one of the special campaign pensions for war service available for destitute men?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: As I have already informed my hon. Friend by letter, the case of Peter Corcoran has been fully investigated by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, who, I am sorry to say, find themselves unable to increase Corcoran's pension under the Warrant, in virtue of which it was granted. At the same time, the Rule which excludes a man who is already a pensioner from the grant of one of the special campaign pensions for Crimean and Indian service prevents him from obtaining relief in that direction.

MR. BODKIN: Is the special campaign pension, from which Corcoran was excluded, larger than the pension which he now receives?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: If they were added together the result would undoubtedly be greater, and I should have been glad if some such result had been possible in this case. But special campaign pensions vary in amount. There is no particular limit put upon them.

MILITARY DISTURBANCES AT BELFAST.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the reported insubordination and riot which occurred in the Victoria Barracks, Belfast, on Saturday night; and whether he can state what was the cause of the riot, and what damage was done?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is the fact that in the rooms of one company of the Dorset Regiment some windows were broken. The circumstances are being inquired into, and I can only say that, so far as is at present known, the reports in the local newspapers are greatly exaggerated.

MR. M'CARTAN: Has the attention of the right hon. Gentleman been called to a report in *The Irish News* of an interview with an officer, according to which the account of the disturbances has been grossly exaggerated; and can he say whether the relations between the soldiers and the townspeople are not excellent?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have no information to contradict the last sentence in the hon. Member's question. It is a fact some windows were broken, and the report in the local newspaper in that respect, at any rate, was exaggerated.

MINING ROYALTIES AND WAYLEAVES.

MR. WOODS (Lancashire, S.E., Ince): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government have agreed to any scheme for giving immediate effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Mining Royalties and Wayleaves; if so, will he explain to the House the scheme which is proposed; and, if not, when will he be in a position to make a full statement on the question?

MR. ASQUITH: I fear that it will be impossible for the Government, consistently with the claims of other business, to propose legislation on the subject of mining royalties and wayleaves during the present Session.

THE VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' DECORATION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a distinction is to be made in the form of the decoration given to commissioned officers and that given to other members of the Volunteer Force for similar length of service; whether it has been usual to make this distinction between the different ranks in respect to war medals and the Victoria Cross; and for what reason a difference should be made in this case?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There is a distinction between the decoration for officers and the new long service medal for Volunteers. The new distinction for long service will be neither a war medal nor a reward for valour, which are common to both officers and men; and it is no departure from the custom of the Service to confine a decoration to the officers' rank.

THE BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the reported speech made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce in the Dominion Senate, referring to an inquiry whether Canada has given an unconditional assent to the Behring Sea Agreement, and had not asked for any compensation, who stated that he was safe in saying that a large portion of the statement made by the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies was not strictly correct; and whether he is now aware of any such incorrectness?

Mr. S. BUXTON: Yes, Sir; my attention has been drawn to the reported speech of the Minister of Trade and Commerce in regard to some answers I gave on Thursday last. The misunderstanding, I think, must have arisen from the fact that one of my answers was misreported. The hon. Member for King's Lynn asked me, as a supplementary question, whether the Dominion Government had not asked for compensation for the sealers seized. I am reported to have answered "No," which would have been incorrect; whereas what I really said was "Notice," meaning that notice of the question should be given. This correction appeared in *The Times* of the following day. As regards my other answers, they were, I believe, substantially correct.

Mr. HANBURY: Have they asked for compensation?

Mr. S. BUXTON: I stated, in reply to the hon. Member for King's Lynn, that the Canadian Government did attach considerable importance to the request for compensation.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the compensation refer to damage done in previous years?

[No answer was given.]

THE EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, considering the short interval of Parliamentary time which has elapsed since the New Code was laid upon the Table, he will delay its withdrawal from the consideration of the House in order to give time for the expression of opinion upon the important matters raised in it?

Mr. ACLAND: I understand that the interval is longer, and not shorter, than usual between the circulation of the Code and the expiration of the month during which it must lie on the Table. No action will be taken till the 1st of May in any case as regards the conditions for annual grants. I shall be happy to consider any particular objections which the hon. Member may wish to lay before me.

Mr. TALBOT: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the addition to Article 73 of the Code requires that the staff is to be settled practically in accordance with the number on the books and not the average attendance, and that the staff is to be settled for each class in the school, and not for the school as a whole; whether the effect of these requirements will be, that in many large schools where the head teacher takes no class, but supervises generally the work of the school, he will no longer count upon the staff in practice; that no pupil teacher will be able to take a class of more than 34 on the Registers; that no certificated assistant will be allowed, unaided, to take a Standard I. if the number of children on the Registers of that standard exceeds 69; and if an untrained certified assistant is in sole charge of Standard I. the number of scholars on the Register must not exceed 57; whether the same Rule is to apply to infants' schools, and also to schools with a large proportion of half-time scholars; and whether, in not a few schools with large lower standards, it will be impossible, on account of the arrangement of the buildings, to organise the schools so as to have two classes in, say, Standard I. and Standard II. respectively?

Mr. ACLAND: The addition to Article 73 is intended to be of the nature of a direction and not of a mandate or a condition of the grant. It is intended to point out the inexpediency of so organising a school that some classes in it are too large to be effectively taught. But I have under my consideration a modification of the Article, which, I think, will avoid the difficulties suggested by the hon. Member.

NEW DOCK AT GIBRALTAR.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have decided upon the site of the new dock at Gibraltar; and, if so, if he can inform the House which is the site chosen?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Admiralty are in communication with the War Office as to the early handing over of the New Mole Parade which has been selected as the site for the dock.

BRITISH COLUMBIA SEALERS.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the date on which notification was published in British Columbia warning sealing schooners that Behring Sea might be closed for a portion of this year; and about how many sealing schooners had left port before and since that date in quest of seals?

MR. S. BUXTON: The Governor General has been asked as to the date by telegraph. I may add that the Award was given in August, and was matter of public notoriety, and the obligation of Her Majesty's Government to enforce it was equally well-known.

MINORS AND THE INCOME TAX.

MR. BRODIE HOARE (Hampstead): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Board of Inland Revenue refuse to return Income Tax to minors whose income comes within the limits of exemption; and, is so, why?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): Income Tax deducted from income which has absolutely accrued to a minor, whose income is below the exemption line, can be reclaimed by his trustee or guardian. If the hon. Member has a special case in view I will make further inquiries, if he will furnish me with particulars.

THE WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT BILL.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state on what day the Government intend to ask leave of the House to introduce their promised Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I cannot name a day at this moment, but I expect it will be an early day.

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire): May I ask whether the Government propose to disesablish and disendow any other Churches in the course of the present Session?

MR. BARTLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether it would be before or after the Local Veto Bill?

[No answer was given.]

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon, &c.): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his intention to introduce the Welsh Disestablishment Bill before he proceeds with the remaining stages of the Budget?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The remaining stages of the Budget are a matter for the future. My hon. Friend must allow me to get over the first fence.

THE CROFTERS' ACT, 1886.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce during this month the promised Bill to amend the Crofters' Act of 1886?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) (who replied) said: The Government have promised a Bill extending the benefits of the Crofters' Act to crofting leaseholders, and they will introduce the Bill after the Local Government Bill for Scotland has been introduced, as has already been stated in the House.

MR. WEIR: Will it be introduced next month?

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): Supposing the Scotch Local Government Bill is not brought forward at all this Session what will become of the Crofters' Bill?

[No answer was given.]

DR. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government propose to take steps to give effect to the verdict of this House definitely pronounced on the Resolution of the 3rd instant, which was in favour of a separate Legislature for Scotland; and if the Government is not prepared to take the usual course in this instance, will he explain on what grounds?

MR. MACLURE: I may point out that I have a similar question on the Paper, and I have postponed it on two previous occasions as an act of courtesy to the right hon. Gentleman. It surely is an extraordinary thing that the hon.

Member for Inverness should now put his question before mine.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I can give a very short answer to both these questions. The Government do not intend to bring forward such a Bill.

Dr. MACGREGOR asked whether the Government would not consider by next Session the expediency of bringing forward a scheme of concurrent Home Rule?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Sufficient unto the Session, *et cetera.*

CAVAN RENT APPEALS.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that many of the cases coming before the Commission, recently hearing fair rents appeals in County Cavan, were appeals brought by local landlords from whom Mr. Wrench, one of the Commissioners, formerly acted as agent; whether it has been brought to his notice that, in the case of Timothy Boland, of Belturbet, a tenant on the Lanesborough estate, the rent fixed by the Commission was 22 per cent. higher than the old rent, though the tenant, on purchasing in 1888 the interest of the former tenant and paying to Lord Lanesborough 3½ years' rent then due, received an undertaking from the agent that the rent would not be raised; and who were the Commissioners adjudicating in this case?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Land Commissioners report that no sitting for fair rent appeals in County Cavan has been held since June, 1893, and Mr. Wrench informs me that he has never taken part, directly or indirectly, in any appeal coming from Lord Lanesborough, or from any other landlord for whom he formerly acted as agent. In the case of Timothy Boland, it is the fact that the Commissioners, after hearing all the evidence, fixed his rent at £37, the old rent having been £30. Inquiry is being made relative to the statement as to the alleged undertaking referred to. The Commissioners who adjudicated in Boland's case were Mr. Justice Bewley and Mr. Commissioner Fitzgerald.

THE RIO DE JANEIRO EXPLOSION.

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether any compensation will be paid to the relatives of Boatswain Harris, who was killed by the explosion at Rio de Janeiro last November?

*Mr. E. ROBERTSON: The widow has been awarded a special pension of £30 a year, and each of the two children special compassionate allowance of £8 a year.

THE MINISTER AT GUATEMALA.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Her Majesty's Minister in Guatemala has yet personally presented his letters of credence to the adjacent Republics of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras; and, in the contrary case, if he will be instructed to do so without further delay, and to give all assistance he possibly can to British commerce in those countries, having regard to the rapid mercantile advance made of late by Germany in Central America to the detriment of Great Britain?

*Sir E. GREY: Her Majesty's Minister in Guatemala has not personally presented his letters of credence to the Governments of the Republics of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras, and a telegram has recently been received from him announcing that, owing to the war between Nicaragua and Honduras, the present moment would not be opportune for doing so. He has standing instructions to give every possible assistance to British commerce in those countries.

THE UGANDA PAPERS.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): May I ask how it is that, although the Papers on Uganda were delivered to the Press on Tuesday evening, they did not come into the hands of hon. Members until this morning? I wish to know what is the reason of the delay in delivering them to hon. Members?

*Sir E. GREY: I think there must be some misapprehension. The Papers were in the House on Tuesday afternoon.

Sir G. Baden-Powell and Mr. Tomlinson both stated that they had only received the Papers that morning.

*Sir E. GREY: I regret the delay that has taken place in the matter, and will undertake to make inquiry with regard to it.

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman what business will be taken to-morrow?

Sir W. HARCOURT: In consequence of matters having been somewhat delayed, the order of Business is a little changed from what was originally intended. We propose at the Morning Sitting to-morrow to introduce the Registration Bill. Monday is already set apart for the Budget. On Tuesday we shall proceed with the Motion for the appointment of a Scotch Grand Committee. On Thursday we propose to take the Evicted Tenants Bill, and Friday morning we have set apart for a discussion with regard to Uganda, for which purpose a Vote for Uganda will be set down for the purpose of enabling a discussion upon the subject to be raised.

UGANDA.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The statement I have to make to the House on the part of the Government with regard to Uganda is as follows: While I make this statement now, I hope that any discussion on it will be postponed until to-morrow week, when the Government will make a fuller statement on the subject. After considering the late Sir G. Portal's Report, and weighing the consequences of withdrawal from Uganda, on the one hand, and, on the other, of maintaining British interests there, Her Majesty's Government have determined to establish a regular administration, and for that purpose to declare Uganda to be under a British protectorate. The details of the arrangements to be made are under consideration. I hope any discussion will be postponed till Friday, when the Government will make a fuller statement.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: When the right hon. Gentleman speaks of the arrangements for the administration of Uganda, can he say how far Uganda is supposed to extend?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I must ask my right hon. Friend to postpone the question until Friday, when these details will be gone into. Of course, all these matters involve arrangement with the existing Company, and so forth.

THE EQUALISATION OF RATES (LONDON) BILL.

Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): Is it intended to proceed with this Bill to-night?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): In view of my promise to give due notice when it will be taken I should not feel justified in bringing it on to-night.

Mr. DARLING (Deptford): When it is taken will it be called on at a reasonable hour?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I cannot make any further promise. I shall bring the Bill on whenever I have an opportunity.

THE DEPRESSION IN AGRICULTURE.

Sir E. LECHMERE (Worcester, Evesham): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will name an early day for the consideration of the existing depression in agriculture?

Sir W. HARCOURT: As I said the other night, I should be extremely happy if any opportunity could be given for discussion on a matter of this kind; but I am sorry to say that at present the Government are not able to name any day for it.

MOTION.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside), in asking for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, stated that it contained only three clauses, embodying the recommendations of the Select Committee that had been appointed to consider railway rates and charges. The Government had not deemed it desirable to go beyond those recommendations. The Bill provided that where a Railway Company had, since December 31, 1892, increased, or might hereafter increase, any rate or charge, it should lie on that Company to prove that such increased rate or charge was reasonable, and for that purpose it would not be sufficient to show that the rate was within the provision of any previous Act of Parliament. Section 12 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, would apply to any such case; that was to say, that if there had been any loss or damage sustained by a trader, the Act would be retrospective, and the Company liable to pay for such loss or damage. He was told that there were many thousands of accounts in the railway books still unsettled awaiting the decision of the House on this point. There was another Bill to be introduced dealing with other questions which had been discussed before the Committee, and upon which that body had reported. Having regard to the urgency of the matter, both as affecting traders and agriculturists, and all trading sections of the community, he suggested that the present Bill should be sent to a Grand Committee as soon as possible after its Second Reading, to be considered with the other Bill, which, he understood, would be introduced with the sanction of both sides of the House, dealing with the questions not included in the present Bill, in order that they might be jointly considered. When that had been done, he hoped they might be able to produce a good and workable Bill, which would give reasonable satisfaction to all parts of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester) said, he did not rise to offer any opposition to the introduction of the Bill, but, acting on behalf of a very large number of traders and agriculturists in the country——

*MR. SPEAKER: I did not catch the opening words of the hon. Baronet, but I understood him to say that he does not oppose the Bill.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD: I did not rise to oppose the introduction.

*MR. SPEAKER: I am bound to hear now a speech against the Bill, under the Standing Orders, and not in support of it.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he wished to know how the right hon. Gentleman could secure the Second Reading of the other Bill that he had referred to in time for it to go to the same Committee? Would he put it down as a Government Order?

MR. MUNDELLA: I cannot put it down as a Government Order, but I shall be happy to use my influence with hon. Members on both sides of the House to have it read a second time, and referred to the Committee, and considered with the Government Bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mundella, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 156.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY,—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

1. £1,771,800, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c.—*Personnel.*

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): When the remarks I was addressing to the Committee the other evening were arrested by the stroke of the clock I was speaking under the influence of my sympathy with Boards of Admiralty in the extraordinary difficulty which they invariably experience in securing even a fairly general approval of the ships which they construct. Let me recall in a few words to the Committee the point at which the Debate had arrived. We have before us a programme of which we are not quite aware what the dimensions may be, but we assume it to be—and I think my noble Friend the ex-First Lord of the Admiralty will be able to prove it to be—a programme which will cost £20,000,000. We have completed a programme which has amounted to more than £20,000,000, and the taxpayers must feel that experts, both naval and professional, doubt whether we have got in the past, or will secure in the future, the value for our money. Doubts are expressed as to the whole of the administration under which the construction of ships takes place, and under which the designs for ships are approved of and carried out. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Holderness addressed himself with great ability to the question, but I am anxious that it should be thoroughly understood outside the House as well as in it that it is not a question of official opinion as against unofficial opinion, but that official opinion endeavours to support itself by every possible means by outside authority. If an attempt were made to call together a Committee every two or three years, or on every occasion when a new programme was to be carried out, I have little doubt from experience of the past that there would be discussions, and that we should not be able to get naval opinion to agree with unanimity on anything. I believe that to be as true as that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third. In naval matters two-thirds of naval and professional opinion would be against the design of the remaining third. I believe that if you were to take the Member for North Belfast (Sir E. Harland), as a distinguished naval shipbuilder, the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed), as an eminent naval constructor, my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Holderness (Commander Bethell), and the gallant Admiral below the Gangway (Admiral Field)——

ADMIRAL FIELD: Leave me out.

MR. GOSCHEN: Well, or any other distinguished Admiral. If we were to put them all four together in a room and declare that they must come to a decision as to shipbuilding designs, I believe that every one of the hon. Members would prepare a different Report. Lamentable as this may be, and calculated to shake the confidence of the public in regard to the designs of our ships, it is, at all events, comforting to reflect that in the past the ships which have proved to be the most successful have been the most attacked when they were constructed. I was about to say the other night when the clock struck that there was no point connected with my administrative experience which had given me such great anxiety as the question whether the *Devastation* was a safe and proper fighting ship. On the one hand, it was said that the *Devastation* was to be the fighting ship of the future. There was a dissentient Report, but that was the decision of half the naval officers. On the other hand, the other half of the naval officers declared that if she went to sea I should be guilty of manslaughter if disaster followed, whilst others declared that if she were not sent to sea we should sacrifice our naval supremacy. At that time there was some great Russian ship which was supposed to be stronger than any of ours, and it was declared that unless we proceeded in shipbuilding in that direction we should forfeit our naval supremacy. On that occasion, at all events, science was proved to be right; the experienced advisers of the Admiralty were justified by the conduct of the *Devastation* at sea; and those who had prophesied disaster were proved to be in the wrong. In regard to the length of our ships, it may be interesting to the Committee to be reminded that, when I came into Office 22 years ago, I found at the Admiralty a Minute from a distinguished Admiral stating that three ships—the *Agincourt*, the *Minotaur*, and the *Northumberland*—were so long that they would break their backs, and that on that account it was dangerous to send them to sea. These prophecies have been falsified, and the ships have been proved to be safe; and the result is, that public opinion, supported by scientific opinion, has gone in the direction of longer ships. At that time I remember the hon. Member for Cardiff received many compliments on the fact that the *Bellerophon* was a very short ship, and that it could be handled with great convenience by naval officers. Thus public opinion fluctuates from time to time. The recalling of these incidents may perhaps lessen the alarm that might follow from the *dicta* of most distinguished naval officers with reference to the ships now being constructed. There is always this tendency to apprehend danger.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): What about the *Victoria?*

MR. GOSCHEN: That is scarcely a fair interruption. I am not pretending that no mistakes have been made; and I do not know how far the mistakes said to have been made in the *Victoria* were responsible for her going down; that seems to me to be still an open question. I was going to point out that when the hon. Member for Cardiff was one of the naval advisers of the Admiralty he was attacked as all naval constructors are; but when he ceased to have an official position, and became a Member of this House, then for the first time his authority was recognised and hon. Members hung upon his lips as expounding the policy of scientific shipbuilding. I am glad to say that, while many criticisms have been made, it is admitted that in Mr. White the Admiralty have secured one of the most distinguished of naval architects. The Admiralty have been most fortunate in having secured in succession the services of three such naval architects as the hon. Member for Cardiff, Sir N. Barnaby, and Mr. White; and it is a little hard upon officials that, because they are officials, it should be considered that they are not equal in breadth of view or receptiveness of new ideas with their competitors outside the official ranks. The hon. Member for North Belfast spoke of the *Resolution*, and said had there been bestowed upon her construction as much intelligence as is bestowed upon the construction of the smallest merchant ship other results would have followed. That is a most exaggerated statement, because the construction of a ship like the *Resolution* calls for an amount of knowledge, scientific attainment, and capacity for which there is no demand in the case of a merchant ship; and to that extent there is no comparison between the two undertakings. Having once presided at the Admiralty the Committee will excuse me if I say that the word "officials" is applied to our naval advisers as if they were clerks, whereas they fill positions for which only men of the highest capacity are chosen. The hon. Member for Holderness spoke as if it were official action at the Admiralty that had delayed the adoption of breech-loading muzzle guns; but what was supposed to be the official action of the Admiralty was in great part due to the individual influence of Admiral Hood, who had studied the ordnance question as few others had done, and to the fact that the Ordnance Committee had the greatest difficulty in arriving unanimously at a satisfactory conclusion. In like manner various schools of fighting officers and scientific officers have held the most diverse views with regard to most difficult questions of construction, and on this ground justice ought to be done to the architects of our warships, who must have all the qualities that are called for in the construction of merchant ships, and must combine many other practical qualities with them. The hon. Member for Belfast spoke of experiments being tried by the Admiralty to determine certain problems. Well, no doubt, if there are novelties, and it be possible to test those novelties by experiment, it is the duty of the Admiralty to do so, but I think it would be rather a strong experiment to ram some old hulk, as my hon. Friend suggested, for the purpose of seeing the effect not upon the hulk, but upon the ship that rammed. About 22 years ago there was a scientific controversy with regard to turret ships; it was held by artillery officers that turrets would jam, and that, therefore, we ought not to spend hundreds of thousands on turret ships. It was, therefore, resolved that an experiment should be made; and it was a costly experiment. The *Glatton* was struck by the *Rupert* at the precise point indicated, and the result was the turret did not jam, but triumphed over artillery. As to ramming, unfortunately, we had too many examples of the effect upon the ships rammed; but the hon. Member for Belfast is anxious about the effect on the vessel which rams; and I understand the hon. Member for Cardiff to say that it would be impossible to make a satisfactory experiment. Wherever there is a controversy that can be decided and brought to a fair conclusion by experiment, although it may involve considerable cost, I think the Admiralty would be wise to make it; but in saying that I must not be understood to imply that the particular experiment advocated is a possible one, although the hon. Member would scarcely suggest it if there were not something to be said in its favour. Coming to the class of ships to be built, I confess it is appalling to hear of the havoc that rams and torpedoes may make in our actions—to think that £800,000 may be sunk and so many men's lives lost from the explosion of a torpedo or the blow of a ram. When the sinking of a *Victoria* may involve the loss of so large a proportion as 1-25th of our whole fighting force, we have got to an extremely dangerous position in this respect if you must concentrate so much upon these very large ships. Still, if naval officers and naval architects say that so long as other countries build large ships we must do the same, I bow to the argument. But the public will not be reconciled to the conclusion that, because we have such large ships, we must have fewer. We may through accident, by the explosion of a torpedo or the blow of a ram, as easily lose a large ship as a small one; and accordingly, while we look at the aggregate expense, we are bound also to look at the total number of our ships. We cannot lose sight of the value of second-class ships, or even of ships which are condemned as almost useless, because some day, if we were unfortunately involved in war, so many of the first line of battleships might be disabled that victory would rest with the Power that had the largest number of second-class battleships, and even third-class battleships. I always regret that ships like the *Monarch* and the *Hercules* should in some quarters be so much abused. The day may come when, in consequence of the destruction of the more valuable ships which we are now constructing, we shall find in the hour of danger that we have an enormous reserve strength in these second-class ships. We ought, therefore, not to leave them out of account too much, nor to let them fall too much out of repair. I state all this with a full consciousness that, however much attention one may have given to these matters, to all these problems as to the constitution of our Fleet, no one ought to give anything approaching a dogmatic opinion upon them. As to the proposals of the Government, I wish we knew something more about them. We know the number of line-of-battleships which are to be built this year, and we know that there is more behind; but we have not got the five years' programme of Her Majesty's present advisers, and we cannot tell, therefore, what our naval strength will ultimately be. We must rely upon the Government and their advisers; at the same time, I think that Parliament has never been asked to give so large a discretion to an Administration as we are asked to give now. I promised at the beginning of my speech that I would avoid all controversial questions as far possible; but there is one matter to which I am bound to allude. The late Government embodied their programme in an Act of Parliament. The present Government have followed the old course, or rather a course between the old and the new. The old course was merely to state the views of the Government for the year. We proceeded upon the lines of having a recognised programme embodied in an Act of Parliament, and so surrounded by safeguards that we hoped it would be possible to carry it out in its entirety in the period and at the cost which we assigned to it. The present Government take a different view. The most disputed point of our naval defence programme was the spreading of the annuity over a larger number of years than were included in the period during which construction was to take place. That was the main point on which we were attacked. But let the Committee understand that the system of annuities extending beyond the time for which the programme was constructed was not at all of the essence of the Naval Defence Act. It would be possible to construct an Act on exactly the same principles, but which should differ in this—that the annuity should close with the period during which construction took place. The Secretary to the Admiralty referred with moderation to the fact that two of these annuities still remain due, and that the present Government have to meet them. But the point was put rather offensively, if I may say so, by the Home Secretary the other day. The right hon. Gentleman said that we had attempted to conceal the matter, and that we had left our successors to pay what we ought to have paid ourselves. The right hon. Gentleman said he would not call such a policy dishonest, but it was unsound. Well, I will not say the right hon. Gentleman's charge is dishonest, but it is very disingenuous. The charge of concealment is preposterous. It was first made by the President of the Local Government Board, who thought that, because part of the cost had been placed on the Consolidated Fund and part on the Estimates, we were ashamed of our programme. There never was a more foolish view, with all courtesy, because we took credit at the time for the expenditure, and never concealed it for a moment. I hope now that we have heard the last of this charge. I had a correspondence with the late Prime Minister on the subject, and practically he withdrew the charge, and I expect that now the matter is only kept alive by certain guide books for electors. Politicians find the point mentioned in these books, and so it is resuscitated. Now I come to a much more important point—namely, the spreading of the annuities over two years beyond the time. Hon. Members opposite have forgotten two points. One is that the taxpayer at the first paid £1,400,000 almost before any appreciable expenditure had been incurred. We took that burden upon us, and if we had then gone out of Office the advantage would have been reaped by the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. We imposed taxes concurrently with the imposition of the annuity. We imposed the Estate Duty and the additional 3d. on beer. We faced the fact that if we imposed this annuity we ought also to impose additional taxation, and that taxation continues, and the present Government derive advantage from it. If, therefore, we imposed this annuity we did not impose a burden on our successors. But I will be quite frank to the Committee. The Secretary to the Admiralty has said that he is sure that if I had known that our naval defence programme was not to be an exceptional effort, I should not have taken the particular financial step which I did take. I think he is right. I admit that we did consider it to be an exceptional effort; we were wrong. At that time no one thought that it would be necessary to made additional proposals like those now made, and I make a present to my opponents of this statement—that if we had foreseen the final result, we should not have taken the particular financial steps which we did take. But I consider that the immense benefits which have been derived from the naval programme in the last five years are sufficient to compensate for any laches which the public might think we had committed in the Naval Defence Act. I do not think that the fact that we have added to the strength of the Navy as we have done will be condemned by the public at large. I am extremely sorry it has been necessary to go into the matter at all, and I think we ought to put an end to these old controversies and carry out our policy without reference to the politics of the particular Administration which initiated it. What I want to contrast now is what are the advantages of a Naval Defence Bill, apart from the question of annuities, with the system which Her Majesty's Government have placed before us. What are the advantages of putting the whole naval programme into a Bill? In the first place, there is the question of speed. It has been recognised that ships have never before been built with such rapidity as they have been under our system; but I will not dwell upon the question of speed, for I admit that speed can be achieved under the ordinary method, although not with so much certainty. What we aimed at, and what we considered to be the enormous administrative advantage we gained under our Defence Act, was securing the programme against changes in the progress of execution. The risks of change come from three different directions. They may come from the professional man, from the politician, or from financial difficulties. Against all these three we guarded in the programme we carried out. There has been a little modification, but only a small one, and if hon. Members only knew how difficult it is in the Admiralty to prevent changes in the construction of ships, I think they would agree with me. Sometimes they are little changes, sometimes very important—changes which may be improvements, but which are not improvements if compared with throwing out of gear the general construction of the ships. Take a programme open to change and not embodied in an Act of Parliament, a new Board of Admiralty may come in looking to different principles to those on which their predecessors acted. They do not approve the ways of their predecessors. They think that certain changes ought to be made. I am sure all those who have had any experience at the Admiralty will confirm that view. I am sure that the hon. Member for Cardiff has experienced great pressure from naval officers, who begged him to make this or that change, and have given him much advice with regard to the construction of the ships which they might have to command. If these changes are made, there is a diversion of time. But it is not only with regard to changes in construction that professional officers desire to make changes. They may think that progress in construction should not be so rapid as originally laid down, but, on the contrary, that a greater portion of the money should be spent on repairs. It has been the experience of one Admiralty Board after another that it requires an extremely strong hand to prevent the diversion of money intended for contruction to repairs. Now, if the public think it is better to leave that discretion, then I can understand their preferring the plan of Her Majesty's Government; but I warn them that they will not have that security that the programme will be carried out which has been shown on the present occasion to be the result of an Act such as we passed. Again, there is the question of political change. It is possible that every succeeding Ministry may take the same view of the needs of the Navy, and it is possible that the convictions that have been carried to the country and this House at one time may last during the execution of the whole of the naval programme; but, for my part, I should like some guarantee that the programme will be carried out, whatever political and financial changes there may be. These advantages will be forfeited by the abandonment of the principle which we have established. There is one more matter with which I think I ought to deal, and that is the question of the surrender of surpluses. What does the surrender of surplus mean? It means that when the House has voted money, and the Department to which it is voted cannot spend it, it is handed back to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, if it is wanted, it must be raised again in the course of the next year. All those who have been inside the Admiralty or the Treasury know that that leads to an endeavour on the part of the Admiralty to spend all the money voted before the end of the financial year, even though it is not absolutely necessary. They endeavour to use up money as fast as it is voted in order not to have to ask the House to vote it again in the next year. If they had to ask the House to vote it again, it would make the Estimates so much higher. Then take contract work. The Secretary to the Admiralty, with a certain amount of complacency, showed that the expenditure last year on contract work had been about that which was expected; but whether contracts can be carried out does not depend upon any action by the Admiralty. It is extremely difficult to foresee all that the contractors may call for. No doubt, with a more business-like arrangement at the Admiralty it would be possible to estimate more closely. My right hon. Friend near me is as capable of making a forecast as any man; but it does not depend entirely either upon the Admiralty or upon the contractors. It is said, "Keep the contractors up to the mark and you will spend the money, and all will go well"; but the contractors, if I am not mistaken, have strike clauses in their contracts; and even if there were not strike clauses, there are the changes in trade, the difficulty of getting a full number of workmen, and other incidents which prevent the contractor from carrying out his best intention of delivering as much work during the year as he otherwise would do. There is the possibility of a breakdown in machinery. Some contractor may find at the most critical moment that his machinery has broken down. What is the result? He cannot earn his money; the money voted has to be returned, and it is put down to the maladministration of the Admiralty. Now, the moral I would draw from all this is, that if you can equalise the expenditure over a certain number of years, then you get rid of this financial disarrangement. The financial regularity which is supposed to ensue from the ordinary system is lost by the financial irregularity of the device to which the Admiralty have recourse in order to avoid a surrender of the surplus. I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer would he not prefer that he should know that the Navy Estimates every year should be a certain amount rather than that he should have to use a surrendered surplus in any one year towards paying off the National Debt, and the next year to provide a sum of money to make up for it? Regularity of expenditure surely must be something that you should aim at if you have not got to sacrifice to it any other great considerations. I think that what the Government have to do is to show that their plan has advantages over ours. Then there is this peculiar point in the construction of ships—that little money is required the first year, much in the middle years, and less money again afterwards. Therefore, in the planning of a programme you cannot do justice to the taxpayers of different years unless, when you are dealing with construction on a large scale, you divide it into regular instalments over a certain number of years. I think that the Government are bound to show cause why they are unable to assent to the more regular system which we have introduced. What are its disadvantages? There are, no doubt, some petty disadvantages which I should hardly think the right hon. Gentleman opposite or his colleagues would insist upon. There are small difficulties of account here and there. Here and there it might be necessary to have an amending Act to increase the total cost; but these are all small disadvantages compared with the greater administrative and financial regularity, the greater speed and greater continuity in construction which are to be found on the other side. The main argument against our scheme, from the point of view of the right hon. Gentleman, is one that he urged with great eloquence upon a previous occasion. It was the disadvantage of withdrawal from the control of Parliament. But what control does Parliament exercise over the naval expenditure under the plan of Her Majesty's Government? None, absolutely none. They do not give us the chance of exercising any kind of control. What has happened during the last year? I am informed that ships have been begun involving a liability of £2,400,000, for which Parliamentary sanction was not obtained. That point has been made by my hon. Friend, and has not been denied. And consider how the liabilities are carried forward. It is said that we have put liabilities on our successors. I think the present plan not only places known liabilities on the successors of the Government for which provision is made by additional taxation, but also liabilities which cannot be estimated by their opponents or the House at large. No one knows the amount of liability entailed by the programme of the Government. We had a celebrated torpedo case where, without Parliamentary sanction, or, at least, *ex post facto* sanction, a liability of £500,000 was incurred.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The amount was £400,000.

MR. GOSCHEN: I think I shall be right in placing it at £500,000. At all events, we are in this position: that this charge was incurred without any authority from Parliament. I wonder if hon. Members below the Gangway are aware that the Government is able to incur this immense expenditure quite regardless of Party control, and treating it with a complacency and gaiety which I must say astonishes me to a certain extent. The gallant Admiral (Admiral Field) says the Government were perfectly right in ordering these torpedo vessels; but even if that is so, I think every Member of the House will agree with me that the Government ought to have come forward and informed the House of what it had done, not by means of a speech, but by a Minute placed upon the Table of the House showing the gravity of the case, and inviting Parliament to condone what had been done in the interests of the Public Service. I am glad to see that the Chancellor of the Exchequer endorses that view. If we are to give discretion in these matters, and give the Admiralty power to divert moneys in this way, Parliament ought at least to be informed of the liability that has been incurred for the future. My hon. and gallant Friend says the Government were right in doing this, as otherwise they might have had to build these torpedo ships in a hurry, but the noble Lord complains that the boats were built in a hurry. If the Government had some distinct strategic information which made it necessary for them to build in a hurry, they were justified in that expenditure, and I would be the first to condone the act. If, however, it was merely that some naval Lord was suddenly struck with the idea that torpedo-catchers were the one thing needed, and that everything else ought to be postponed, I say that is one of the dangers which exist owing to the absence of a Naval Defence Act. I ask Her Majesty's Government whether they do not think we are entitled to somewhat more information than we have got? What is the liability for future years which we are about to incur through the programme of the Government? We are absolutely in the dark as to whether we shall require £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 more next year. It is a very strong order for the Government to ask the House not only to give them this blank cheque, but this whole batch of blank bills, extending over I do not know how many years, without having placed us in possession of any information as regards their general scheme. They pledge themselves to carry that scheme out, but they cannot pledge their supporters, who do not know whether the programme involves £8,000,000, £16,000,000, or £24,000,000, and such a pledge is, of course, impossible. I give the Government every credit for the desire to do their best during the time they are in Office, but it is impossible for them to pledge themselves in advance, when everything remains uncertain, and when the Government will not put their case before the country as a full programme. One of the main reasons given why the House is not taken into confidence with regard to the programme is that foreign nations would learn what ships we intend to build, and might thereby be stimulated to increased activity. The Secretary to the Admiralty said he did not wish to make a flourish of trumpets; but my belief is that nearly every Naval Power in Europe knows the secret. We have seen a very admirable sketch in *The Pall Mall Gazette* containing information which has been refused to the House of Commons. Whether that scheme is correct or not, it must have been put forward by one who has a certain degree of access to the knowledge as to what is going on in Her Majesty's Dockyards, because there is in it proof of a good deal of technical information. Apart from that, is it really believed that foreign Governments will not know what we are doing? We know what foreign Governments are doing. We cannot prevent them from knowing what we are doing, and I do not mind them knowing. I look upon this programme as the embodiment of the decision of the nation at large, and I do not think there is any harm whatever in foreign nations being acquainted with what we are doing. I cannot admit that it was the publication of the programme under the Naval Defence Act of 1889 which led to increased shipbuilding in France and Russia. The explanation is to be sought rather in political events, which can be proved by dates, to which I will not now refer. Foreign nations ought to know, and I believe they do know, that our Navy has to perform a vast number of duties which are not imposed upon other Navies; and therefore we may say to our foreign neighbours in perfect amity that we must have an overpowering Fleet, because our circumstances are so entirely different. I have seen foreign countries speak of "aggression" on our part. This is simply nonsense. Every foreign statesman and every foreign journalist ought to know that aggression is absolutely foreign to any of the attempts which we are making, and which we are determined to continue, to increase our Fleet. I have never been wedded to the principle that our Fleet should be equivalent or somewhat superior to two foreign Fleets. I do not think that is a proper standard. We might be involved, say, in a war with France and Russia, and at the same time contentions might arise with other Powers. In those circumstances we should be in extreme difficulty if we had to barter away some of our claims in order to deal with the situation which had thus suddenly arisen. Or suppose we were at war with America, and Russia and France were suddenly to raise the question of Egypt—if this country should ever have the misfortune to be engaged in such a mighty war—that would be the time when pretensions would be made upon us from other quarters, and so, if we were not ready to meet not only two Powers, but a larger combination of Powers, we might be in a position of great danger. We must look these things in the face, and the Government have looked them in the face. They would not have proposed such a programme unless they were aware of these necessities. I will conclude my remarks with the observation that, however large the proposal is, I think there are grounds to justify it on considerations of amity and peace. It is quite certain that the larger our power the more sure shall we be of allies if ever we get into difficulty. All securities for peace would be doubled by the knowledge that we were the stronger side. I have made these remarks in reference to the suggestion of the Government, that we ought to keep our programme secret, because foreign nations ought not to know what we are doing. I can only repeat that we are entitled to know what we are doing upon every ground of national security, and there is no question whatever that if foreign countries should think it necessary to increase their armaments we should still hold that we must still have that superiority which Her Majesty's Government acknowledge ought to be maintained, and which, I believe, the country is, under all circumstances and at any cost or sacrifice, determined to have.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has, in a long and interesting speech, ranged over many topics, beginning with the principle of ship construction and ending with the rather alarming prospect of a universal war. I do not intend to deal either with the first or the last topic. An important part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was devoted to the financial arrangements in connection with our naval proposals, and to that alone I shall address myself. Like himself, I do not desire to go back upon the past or to reopen old controversies. The right hon. Gentleman delivered a very touching funeral oration over the Naval Defence Act. He seemed to have been rather pricked by conscience because the operation of the Imperial Defence Act and the Naval Defence Act has been to leave the unhappy Chancellor of the Exchequer who succeeded him to pay some five millions of money which he himself was not kind enough to meet. He was, however, good enough to say that he gave me his compassion, and that he would be ready to give me his assistance in making good the amount. I will try to meet him on that point. I will not go into the history of what I will only call the most unfortunate experiment, from the point of view of finance, that ever was made, nor will I review the sorrows of all the Departments who have suffered in consequence of the making of that experiment. I will come at once to the leading principle which, in the opinion of the Government, ought to direct our finance in matters of this kind. I will take the question upon the broader ground which the right hon. Gentleman has mentioned. He said perfectly truly that the principle adopted by the late Government was to put their financial arrangements into a state which was designed to protect themselves against disturbance or change from any cause. That, no doubt, was the policy of the Naval Defence Act apart from its particular defects. But we absolutely dissent from, and under no circumstances would adopt, a policy of that description. The right hon. Gentleman said our principal objection had been to the seven years' annuity. That was not our principal objection. The objection to the seven years' annuity was that it was unfair that liabilities for construction should not be met during the period of the construction. That was altogether a secondary objection. Our fundamental objection was that the system adopted violated the first principles of the financial constitution of this country, which is that the finance of the Army and Navy and the whole expenditure of this country belongs to the House of Commons, and to the House of Commons alone. The fundamental vice of the Naval Defence Act was that it made the House of Lords the partner with the House of Commons in dealing with the finance of the country. Gentlemen opposite may be disposed to give the control of the finance to the House of Lords and to leave them to provide the money. But, in our opinion, the voting of the money, the control of the money, and the dealing with the money belong to the House of Commons, and to the House of Commons alone, and it is not for the House of Lords to say whether the arrangements we make should be changed or not. Under a Naval Defence Act what might happen? The House of Commons might come to the conclusion that the arrangements made two or three years before were not good arrangements and might desire to change them, but the House of Lords could say, "No; you shall not change them; we will not allow the Act to be altered." I do not know whether the traditions of the Conservative Party are so abandoned that they are prepared to throw overboard the control of the House of Commons over finance. Certainly no one on this side of the House would ever consent to an arrangement of that character. We all know what happened some 20 years ago or more with reference to the Paper Duty. The House of Commons repelled the Paper Duty and the House of Lords rejected the Bill, the result being that the tax remained upon the people. What was done in consequence of that action of the House of Lords? All the financial arrangements of the year were put into one Bill, so that the House of Lords could not touch that Bill without rejecting the whole provision for the expenditure of the country, and ever since that it has been a fundamental principle that you shall not have separate Bills dealing with financial expenditure which would enable the Lords to control expenditure that it is the right of the Commons alone to deal with. Therefore, on the broad principle, under no circumstances could we agree to placing for a period of years the financial proposals of the country, least of all with respect to the great Services of the Army and Navy, in a Statute which would take out of our possession the control and disposal of the taxes. That is a broad principle, on which we are prepared to stand. It is hardly necessary for me to deal with the minor arguments of the right hon. Gentleman on this subject, though I should have very little difficulty, I think, in assuring him that they have as little force as those upon the larger issue. He says, let the naval proposals of the Government be put in a Statute so that you may not be able to change them. Why should you not be able to change them? He himself in an earlier part of his speech said he did not feel at all sure—and I think it quite open to doubt—whether the decision of the present advisers of the Admiralty to build a number of big ships is the best decision that can be arrived at, or whether it might not be better to build a smaller number of big ships and a larger number of small ships. Supposing you found a few years hence that foreign countries are building fewer big ships and more small ones, what sense would there be in having a Statute which would prevent you making any change in your plans? The right hon. Gentleman says the advisers of the Admiralty may at one time take one view and at another time another view. Well, at the respective times at which they form their opinions they may be perfectly right, and, that being so, why should you for six years or for any other term prohibit yourselves from making changes which may be very beneficial and necessary? The right hon. Gentleman referred to the question of torpedoes. Supposing that during the course of the five years you found you had not torpedo-boats enough, and that the country was placed in great danger in consequence. What is the sense of binding yourself by Act of Parliament to go on building great ironclads when you may be exposed to great danger because you have not a sufficient number of torpedo-boats? This system of tying up your hands and your legs shows a profound distrust both of the House of Commons and of the English people. Why should they not be at liberty to judge from time to time what is necessary for that time, and whether the decision of five years previously cannot be modified with advantage? The right hon. Gentleman says we attach importance to Parliamentary control. We do attach importance to Parliamentary control; but by Parliamentary control we mean the control of the House of Commons, and of no one else. What he means by Parliamentary control is joint control by the House of Commons and the House of Lords. That is not the Parliamentary control we contemplate in matters of this description. As to what the right hon. Gentleman said about things being done by the Admiralty without the cognisance of the House of Commons, I believe the Admiralty ought to have the power to take upon itself the responsibility of commencing work which it thinks necessary at the time for the safety of the country. If the right hon. Gentleman says the Admiralty ought to take the earliest opportunity of communicating its action to the House of Commons I entirely agree with him. I say, however, that if you find yourself all of a sudden in need of a number of torpedo-boats because five years ago you passed an Act of Parliament——

Mr. GOSCHEN: I beg pardon; I did not say you should not have these boats, but that you should come to Parliament to pass the money for them.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman. He would not say you should not take action because you could not ask Parliament beforehand. If he says the proper thing is to bring the matter before the House of Commons at the earliest possible moment, I think that is a perfectly reasonable view, and that is what I understand by Parliamentary control. The right hon. Gentleman also raised a point about the surrender of the surplus. It seems to be supposed that you cannot use the surplus of one year for work in the next year without an Act of Parliament. That is not so at all. Supposing the Admiralty spent £200,000 less one year than they had supposed they wanted. In that case, according to a rule which is at the root of all your finances, and which it would inflict great injury on your finance to depart from, the £200,000 must be surrendered at the end of the year, but it does not necessarily go into the Sinking Fund to be applied to the reduction of the National Debt. All you have to do next year is to get Parliament to re-vote the money, and it will then come into use next year just as if it had been placed in a Naval Defence Act. Therefore, all these objections respecting the difficulty of the Admiralty being obliged to spend in a particular year money which it does not want are entirely imaginary.

Mr. GOSCHEN: May I ask whether, if the money is not spent, it does not go into the Sinking Fund?

Sir W. HARCOURT: No.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Then it is a new system.

Sir W. HARCOURT: No; it was introduced long before either the right hon. Gentleman or I went to the Treasury. According to all sound principles you surrender the money that is not spent and to have the advantage of that money; you re-vote it under the authority of the House of Commons. In my opinion, that is a system infinitely better in administration than any Act of the character of the Naval Defence Act. Those are the reasons why the Government cannot adopt the policy of the late Parliament and the late Government of placing practically for five years the naval expenditure of the country out of the control of the House of Commons. That is a system we object to in principle and which we say is bad, because it may prevent you from making certain payments that may be required. Supposing, for instance, in the course of the next five years the political condition of Europe should change very much for the better—which God grant it may! Suppose the House of Commons thinks that the new arrangements place great burdens upon the people, and that they should be lightened, is it for the House of Lords to say, "You shall not," and to say that "For five years you shall make no change?" That is a system in which we could not, under any circumstances, concur. There is only one point more which I wish to refer to. The right hon. Gentleman spoke on the question of the liability imposed upon us under this scheme. My right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty has stated why the Government do not think it would be desirable to make public what they consider to be the whole of their programme. It is not necessary that I should repeat that. They consider it a question of high policy that all things should not be published upon the housetop, and are therefore not disposed to publish everything they intend to do. Of course, with regard to our liabilities present and future, we cannot, unless we are prepared to make public all our programme, declare at the present time what they will be. For instance, in the case of certain ships, it is a fact that the contracts are not yet concluded, and yet we were calmly asked to-night to give a detailed account of their cost. I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman gave the minimum and maximum amounts to be expended on ships before the contracts were completed.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Government can never state to the House of Commons what our proposed ships will cost until he has himself passed or accepted the contracts for their completion? Is that in accordance with the idea of Parliamentary control?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I appeal to business men whether it is practical to publish the price of ships whilst the contracts are being made. The reply to the right hon. Gentleman's question seems to be a matter only of common sense. The right hon. Gentleman also asked me a question which I was rather surprised at. He wanted to know what provision I was going to make for the next few years.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Unless and until we know these matters it will be impossible for us to judge of them fairly.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not wish to deal with these matters in a controversial spirit, but I thought it desirable to state very distinctly that we are at issue with the late Government on the question of finance. We are not in favour of dealing with this matter by a Statute, and we do not wish to press the financial matters so that they will be at the mercy of the veto of the House of Lords. Moreover, we are unwilling to make any arrangements which would deprive the House of Commons of its discretion to deal with the matter at any time it thinks fit if for any reasons whatever these arrangements should be modified. We think these are reasonable principles and the grounds upon which the Government have reverted to the old Constitutional policy and the reason why we do not propose to follow the new example set us in the Naval Defence Act of the last Parliament.

*LORD G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I have listened with great surprise to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. It places an entirely different aspect upon what we have been told was the naval policy of the Government. We have been told in the clearest way that the Government are committed to a five years' programme, every detail of which has been thought out and carefully elaborated, and that it was only for reasons of "high state" that the Government decline to place the House in full possession of their scheme. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes forward and entirely pooh-poohs the whole idea of a five years' scheme. One of the great disadvantages, he says, of having a binding Act is that one cannot alter one's mind before the five years expire, and he has hinted that unlooked-for circumstances might arise when the power to make a change would be desirable. With that explanation vanishes all hope of a continuous programme. I always had grave doubts whether Her Majesty's Government mean what I can only describe as "serious business." It is impossible to bind the House or the country to any scheme of which they had not full knowledge, and it is clear that if the scheme of which we heard so much is not referred to the House of Commons in its entirety, when the successors of Her Majesty's Government—supposing there were a change of administration — proposed in a future Session to continue the scheme, it would be in the power of gentlemen below the Gangway opposite who have helped the Government to keep their plans secret to object. Who is to be believed—those Members of the Government who tell us that they are pledged to a five years' scheme or the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in a light and airy way has absolutely demolished the idea of a five years' continuous policy? The late Chancellor of the Exchequer in a speech altogether free from Party recrimination has shown the House in the clearest way that any scheme extending over a number of years cannot be effective unless it is associated with a business-like procedure, which he submitted with reference to the present proposal is not likely to be the case. He pointed out the results achieved by an expenditure of £21,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has also said that the House of Lords ought to have nothing whatever to do with the control of the national expenditure. An excellent sentiment! But the right hon. Gentleman when he made that statement forgot that there is a very distinguished and noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty at the present moment who is mainly responsible for the naval expenditure of this country. It is a curious fact that the right hon. Gentleman has never been a Member of a Radical Administration in which the First Lord of the Admiralty was a Member of the House of Commons. The House of Lords must not interfere with the national expenditure! Was a more ridiculous proposition than that advanced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer ever put forward? I will just ask the right hon. Gentleman to recollect his own experience. In 1886-7 he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he had to provide a large sum under a scheme of expenditure upon the Navy, a sum greater than was anticipated because the scheme of that day was not associated with business-like procedure, and consequently the Estimates were increased. But how did the right hon. Gentleman meet the difficulty? He suspended the Sinking Fund, and a Bill to that effect went to the House of Lords for their sanction. Why, Sir, it is mere platform claptrap to pretend that the Naval Defence Act deprives the House of Commons of control or supervision of details in this expenditure. If the majority of this House did not approve of the Naval Defence Act they had but to put it into an Act of Parliament and send it up to the House of Lords, and the House of Lords would have no option but to assent. The object of the Naval Defence Act was not to give the House of Lords a control in national expenditure, but to insure that, unless strong reasons were given which should convince the House of Commons, there should not be any interference with the continuous prosecution of the process of shipbuilding which was supposed to be essential for the national safety. Let us look at this matter seriously. Do the Government mean business or not in this matter? The Government had asked the House to assent to a fragmentary proposal involving a liability of £14,000,000 sterling for shipbuilding alone. The Press have published various statements which supply the rest of the information concerning the Government scheme. Whether they are accurate or not, I am convinced from my own experience, and by the light of the advice of those with whom I have been associated, that if there is a five years' scheme the amount to be spent for shipbuilding cannot be less than £25,000,000. To this amount there has to be added at least £5,000,000 for the Ordnance Vote; so that, assuming the Admiralty have their way, the scheme involves an expenditure of £30,000,000. This expenditure represents an enormous industrial undertaking; it is a gigantic manufacturing enterprise; and surely if the House is in earnest it ought to insist upon seeing that so gigantic an expenditure is associated with a business-like procedure. The Government, however, has no procedure whatever. To the surprise of every financial authority on this side of the House the Chancellor of the Exchequer has read out a statement stating money can be re-voted out of the cash balances of the preceding year for the relief of the subsequent year. So far as I know, such a course has never been taken before.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The sum was voted out of the money for this year.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I understand the proposal to be this: a certain sum of money is not spent, and the purpose or liability for which that money was voted is carried over to next year. Therefore, there is in addition to these liabilities this transferred liability from the preceding year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer pretends that the money can be voted out of the cash balance of the preceding year, although the account has been closed. [Sir W. Harcourt: No.] At any rate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, it appears to me, suggesting a principle of greater financial irregularity than any of which his predecessors in Office have been guilty. When the late Government proposed the procedure under the Naval Defence Act they had in their recollection the difficulties which their predecessors had to encounter. One was the substitution of steel for wood in shipbuilding, a change which rendered it almost impossible to continue the system of shipbuilding under the system of annual Votes. Since steel has taken the place of timber it must be remembered that nearly all the parts of a ship are made of steel, and are supplied direct by the contractor and afterwards worked up in the ship as fast as the material arrives. The progress of a ship depends on the supply of steel, and the supply of steel depends on the state of trade in the country; and the national finance is liable to be upset by the irregularities of contractors resulting either from periods of brisk or dull trade. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will no doubt remember the difficulty he had to contend with in 1886-87, when he was first appointed to the Office he now holds. Lord Northbrook proposed a shipbuilding programme which in its entirety was a small one, amounting to something like £3,000,000. In the second year there was a miscalculation of over £500,000, and this miscalculation upset the Budget. The result of an absence of business-like procedure, therefore, forced the House of Commons to upset the business-like method by which the National Debt was reduced. It was because the late Government had this knowledge before them that the procedure of the Naval Defence Act was adopted. And it was fortunate they did so. One year they were no less than £1,000,000 out of their calculation, and this through no fault of the Admiralty. It was due to two reasons—one, the

RAGLAN BARRACKS SEWAGE OUTFALL.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether steps have been taken by the War Department to obviate the pollution occasioned to the public bathing place at Devonport by the sewage outfall from the Raglan Barracks?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Provision for this service is made in the present Army Estimates, and the work will be commenced as soon as possible.

DUBLIN UNION PRECEPTS.

MR. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the form of precept annually issued by the Clerk of the Peace to the clerks of the Dublin Unions has this year been altered by striking out so much of paragraph 2 as related to objections to the names of inhabitant occupiers; and if he will state by what authority, or under what circumstances, this alteration came to be made?

MR. J. MORLEY: The form of precept was amended by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, in pursuance of the powers given him by the Parliamentary Registration (Ireland) Act, 1885, Section 8. The amendment was considered necessary in order to draw the attention of the clerks of Unions and other officers to the rights of rated occupiers and householders who had occupied different premises of the requisite value in immediate succession during the 12 months preceding the 20th July in each year. In some of the forms hitherto used in Ireland—namely, in relation to the supplemental list of householders and in the form of precept for boroughs, there was no reference made to the rights acquired by occupation of premises in immediate succession. This omission appears to have led to injustice in the case of such classes of voters. In the corresponding English forms there had not been any such omission. The note at foot of amended form is in the same terms as in the form No. 1 in the Schedule to the Statute, directing the paragraphs as to the existing Register to be modified by making them apply, so far as regards the marginal additions "objected" or "dead," to householders in the then existing Register.

PORTADOWN POST OFFICE.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when it is proposed to commence the building of the new post office at Portadown?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): This is a matter which is under the control of the Board of Public Works in Ireland, and I am informed that no provision for building the new post office at Portadown has been made in the Estimates for the current financial year. Consequently, the work cannot be begun until next year.

CIVIL SERVICE SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

MR. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, in view of the fact that the annual increments of salary of Second Division clerks in the Civil Service are so regulated as to provide for those clerks reaching a certain maximum of £190 per annum after 19 years' service, and of the fact that the annual increments of the new class of assistant clerks have been so regulated as to necessitate a service of 28 years before the attainment of the maximum of £150 per annum, whether, having regard to the ages of the men constituting this class, he will consider the advisability of adjusting the annual increments of salary so as to enable these clerks to attain their maximum at an earlier period of life?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: As £190 is far below the maximum salary of the Second Division, there is no parallel between the cases quoted. The scale of salary of assistant clerks or abstracters was fixed after careful consideration with reference to the nature of their duties, and I cannot see any reason for reconsidering it.

SICK LEAVE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any complaints have reached him of the insufficiency of the amount of sick leave on full pay allowed in any one year to the new class of assistant clerks—namely, six weeks less the amount of holiday than foreign nations. If we should be engaged in a war, the first function of the Navy would be to maintain our supremacy at sea, and the second—in my judgment a wholly secondary duty—to protect the commerce upon the sea. So long as we have command of the sea it is easy enough to give protection to commerce, but the moment we lose command of the sea no amount of small vessels in all parts of the world would avail us. We are short of big ships, but we have a considerable excess of small vessels over foreign nations, and therefore, unless some very strong reason can be given for the contrary, I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government will consider the propriety of substituting a small number of large vessels for a greater number of small ones. The Financial Secretary stated the other night that these cruisers were to be sheathed. That means that they have to go to distant parts of the world, but they have nothing to fight there. Foreign nations sent their old or almost obsolete vessels away on such duty. When a struggle does take place it will be the nation which has the most large ships in European waters that will win the battle. That being so, we ought to strengthen ourselves in large vessels, and not fritter away our money in small vessels. Apart from that, the larger vessel is the better investment. The bigger the vessel the longer it remains an effective fighting ship; the smaller the vessel the sooner it becomes obsolete. There is another reason, and one which I urge in the interests of the Admiralty. The Colonial Office and the Foreign Office are always putting pressure on the Admiralty to send a ship here and a ship there—to hoist the flag, to protect some particular industry, to accelerate some little diplomatic difficulty. This work must be done, but there is a limit to the number of the ships which can be employed upon it. In view of the fact that foreign nations are concentrating their full naval power, this tendency to dispersion is an obvious danger in the event of our being suddenly called to battle. Big ships mean concentration, and small ones dispersion of power, and I hope the Government will carefully look into this question, and consider the propriety of some redistribution of expenditure as between large and small vessels. I apologise to the Committee for having detained it at such length. I hope I have put a wrong interpretation upon the language used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In reference to the scheme, I can only say I congratulate the Government upon having made so large an addition to naval expenditure. I hope that this addition will grow year by year, and so far as I and my friends are concerned we shall do everything, if the Government pursue that course, to help them. At the same time, I think that by dissociating their scheme of expenditure from a business-like procedure they have endangered the success of their plan, and I am sure they are unnecessarily raising difficulties in the way of consecutive administration.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, he did not rise for the purpose of making a speech, but simply for the purpose of asking a question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a very important statement as to the use which could be put by the Treasury of the balances which were surrendered. He wanted to put a concrete case. By the Naval Appropriation Account, 1892-93, as audited by the Auditor General, there was a surplus on the normal services of £131,000 odd less a deficit on other Votes of £15,000, leaving a net surplus of £115,000. The Navy Estimates proposed for last year amounted to £14,240,000, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech stated that he laid the necessary taxation on the country to provide that sum. Therefore, at that time he had in his balances at the Exchequer a surplus from the previous year of £115,000, as was shown by the Navy Appropriation account of 1892-93. He wished to know whether in laying on taxation the right hon. Gentleman allowed for that surplus, and if not what became of the £115,000?

Sir W. HARCOURT, in reply, stated that it was difficult on the spot to follow the question of the hon. Member. As far as he understood the matter he had to say that if the money was not wanted by the Navy it was surrendered. If there had been raised, say, £17,500,000, and they did not want to issue £200,000 of that for the wants of the particular Vote, they could re-vote that £200,000 which was not expended under the Vote of the year. If the Chancellor of the railway strike in Scotland; and, second, the inability of the founders and contractors to supply heavy steel castings, so that they were absolutely unable to lay down the vessels. Now let us see how that would upset the calculations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer if his estimates are at the last moment disturbed in that way. It is to the interest of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Treasury to see that any continuous scheme of shipbuilding is associated with a procedure which will distribute the cost over a number of years, and minimise as much as possible any disturbance of the Estimates. I admit, however, that the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is one which raises grave doubts in my mind as to whether he seriously contemplates the prosecution of this great scheme. I have always understood that when the late Government was in Office the great objection to the procedure of the Naval Defence Act was that it postponed liabilities. That was, I think, the great charge made by the Party opposite against us. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not mean to stop this five years' scheme, and if it is to be pushed through, the House is asked to assent to it without knowing the full extent of the liability. I think I shall be able to show before I sit down that if the Admiralty are to carry out a five years' scheme, that scheme must necessitate double the increased cost which is proposed in the present Estimates. It is only fair to the House and to the country in these circumstances that the Government should take both into their confidence, and that they should make known what were the dimensions of the scheme. I was disposed to look upon the proposal as a large, far-seeing, and progressive scheme, and I was prepared to congratulate the Government on bringing it forward, and to assure them of the assistance of the Opposition in carrying it through to its proper consummation. But after the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, filled as it was with taunts, and being doubtful whether there was not some change of opinion among Her Majesty's advisers, who at the last moment had fallen into line with public opinion, I am afraid that they are now only prepared to propose Estimates for one year, and to make no provision for meeting the expenditure of subsequent years. I am not finding fault with the magnitude of the scheme which the figures reveal; but I want the House and the country to know that we are so far pledged to those proposals that there will not hereafter be any special objection or obstruction to their realisation should there be any change of Government or any fresh appeal to the electors. With additional allowances for new ships it is clear that by this shipbuilding scheme £22,000,000 will have to be provided during the next four years, and that involves an average Shipbuilding Vote of £5,500,000. But the present Vote is only £4,500,000—a difference of £1,000,000 a year. Surely the House ought to be told what the Government's intentions are. In the only two shipbuilding programmes which have been laid before the House of recent years, the whole scheme and expenditure were at once declared. If the late Government were wrong, as we have been so often told, in postponing liabilities, how much worse are the present Government in concealing liabilities! I have calculated that there must be at least an increase of £500,000 in the Ordnance Vote for the next four years. Then with regard to the Works Vote. No doubt the Works Vote appears to be of large dimensions, but naval mobilisation is quite different from military mobilisation. As there are only three large ports—Chatham, Devonport, and Portsmouth—where the ships can take in stores and guns, it is essential for purposes of concentration to have a large extension of the accommodation at each port. Without that, rapid mobilisation would be impossible. Therefore, I entirely agree with the Admiralty in looking forward to a large scheme of works in connection with the naval arsenals of the country; but the amount of money which they take for the prosecution of those plans is clearly insufficient. It may be sufficient for the present year, but for the next four years there must be an average increase of £250,000. When the Home Secretary was electioneering lately in Berwickshire, he attacked the late Board of Admiralty so ferociously that it is necessary to take notice of what he said. The Board of Admiralty is not entirely composed of politicians; and though I do not attach much importance to any attack made in the heat of an election, the distinguished naval officers with whom I was associated, and to whom the attack equally applied, value their professional reputations. The Home Secretary said—

> "I am anxious that the country should note the difference between our policy and that of our predecessors. We have not been content with building a number of additional ships without making additional provision for the men to man them."

Or, to state it in plain terms, that the late Board of Admiralty, including both civilian and naval officers, were guilty of the egregious folly of building a large number of ships without making an effort to man them. What are the facts ? The total number of men required to man and officer every single ship built under the Naval Defence Act was 21,984. While those ships were in course of construction a number of older ships passed out of commission, and their crews, numbering 5,000 men, were freed for other service. Thus 17,000 additional men were required altogether by the Naval Defence Act. The late Board of Admiralty resigned 18 months ago, or nearly two years before the last ship was completed. They had then added to the active list 12,700 men, 5,500 to the Naval Reserve, and 1,000 to the Pensioner Reserve, making a total of over 19,000. Probably the Home Secretary will see that some apology from him is due to the distinguished naval men against whom he made an unjustifiable attack upon an utterly unfounded statement. With respect to the present programme, at least 26,000 men will be required to man the ships to be built during the next five years. Assuming that 3,000 men will be available from ships passing out of commission, 23,000 will remain to be provided for during the next four years. A considerable number will come, I think, from the Naval Reserve ; and if 4,500 men are added to the active list each year during the next four years an increase of £1,400,000 in the Estimates will be involved. That, together with the other increase I have mentioned, amounts to a total increase of at least £3,000,000 in order to give effect to this five years' scheme. If the Government are in earnest they ought to give some indication of that increase. Surely that is incumbent upon them. Supposing there should be a change of Government, the new Board of Admiralty would be attacked at once for merely attempting to carry out their predecessors' policy, on the ground that the expenditure had been concealed from the country. That would be a great obstacle to a continuous naval policy. Surely, then, in the interests of fair play, and in order to consummate their own scheme, the Government ought to take the House more into their confidence, and give some information concerning the scheme they were putting forward. Now, Sir, I think there has never been in any Estimates so little information afforded as to the cost of particular ships. The Financial Secretary stated that it was not advisable to do so, because several ships had not been put out to contract. But the *Terrible* and *Powerful* had been contracted for, and why should not the cost of these vessels be stated ?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I have no objection to give the information.

Lord G. HAMILTON: But it is not here. It ought to be in the Estimates, and it is not.

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: When I said there was no objection to give the information, I should have added, "provided there are no subsidiary contracts pending."

*Lord G. HAMILTON: I think I have shown clearly that the House must have more information given. The right hon. Gentleman can hardly expect that the House will be satisfied with the tone in which his announcements have been made as to the intentions of the Government. Now, one or two words with respect to the criticisms of the hon. Member for West Belfast and my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Holderness Division. A very good reply might be made to the criticisms they advanced. Both hon. Members attacked the Admiralty for not arming old vessels with modern guns. I personally, perhaps, am more responsible than anyone else for the policy pursued. The defence is that the long modern guns are not suitable for the broadside ships designed to carry short guns. I wish that some day the Admiralty would try the experiment of putting several of these long guns on a broadside ship, and when firing them at the extreme angle make the critics work the guns. These old vessels were not built for long guns; and be it a turret-ship or barbette, the diameter of the turret or barbette must regulate the length of the guns put into it. There is great difficulty in working the guns of such vessels, because in consequence of the extra weight of the vessels produced by the heavy armaments they are deeply immersed. My own view is that these vessels, excellent as they are, should be equipped with the guns of vessels of their own date. The guns with which they are armed are good guns of their date, and in penetration and accuracy of fire are quite equal to the breech-loading guns of that time. I quite agree with both my hon. Friends in one criticism, and that is that it is essential under modern naval conditions that vessels should be built as long and of as high a freeboard as possible. It is curious to notice the vessels built between 1860 and 1870 and compare them with those built between 1870 and 1880. The vessels of the earlier period are magnificent specimens of naval architecture, and they are still looked upon by naval officers as useful either as battleships or cruisers. But those built during the later period cannot be placed in that category. They undoubtedly fail, and though they might be useful as coast-guard vessels, I do not think any Admiral would care to have them on his list of battleships. A certain moral may be drawn from the failure of these vessels. There were two influences operating upon the Admiralty at that time; one, the opinion of naval officers, who were anxious to shorten vessels in order that they might be handier and easier to steer; and the other, the views of the mechanical engineers, who were anxious to increase the size of the guns in order to show what the profession could do. The result was that the Admiralty gradually drifted until our vessels became mere rafts with low immersion, having heavily-armed martello towers and carrying heavy guns. I cannot help thinking that if the Admiralty were in error they were forced by outside public opinion to adopt these vessels. If the Admiralty had been left alone there would not have been so many failures to regret, and I think we may safely leave the naval officers at the Admiralty, with such outside opinions as they wish to call in on certain points, to design vessels in future. The hon. Member for Cardiff has himself handsomely acknowledged that in his judgment there has been a marked improvement in the designs of vessels during the last few years. We have heard a good deal about the 22 torpedo-boat destroyers which the right hon. Gentleman ordered. I do not in the least dispute the necessity for that order, but as the late Chancellor of the Exchequer has pointed out, the assent of the House should have been obtained before these orders were placed. I had the advantage the other day of seeing one of the first specimens of them, and I think the name torpedo-boat destroyer is misleading. They are nothing more nor less than large torpedo-boats, and so much do they resemble them that at a couple of hundred yards they cannot be distinguished from torpedo-boats. They are very fast, and fully answer the anticipations of their designers. They are intended to protect the commerce and Navy of this country from the attacks of torpedo-boats. I doubt whether they will be able to perform that duty. The main danger of torpedo-boat attack is at night. It is impossible to suppose that a port can be masked or blockaded by such vessels in bad weather. If we want vessels for this night-work it is essential they should be bigger, and there should be more protection for the men performing such duty. In the new programme there are a considerable number of small vessels. My own opinion is strongly in favour of large vessels. The more one considers the particular danger which threatens our naval supremacy the more he will see that it is incumbent upon this country to spend more money on large ships and less on small ships. The peculiarity of the naval situation in Europe at present is this: that not only has a considerable number of foreign nations spent large sums on big ships, but when those big ships are complete they will be kept at home. There has never been so much concentrated naval force in European waters as at the present time. The French have a most powerful fleet at Toulon, and they do not send their big vessels abroad. We, on the other hand, have large interests to protect in all parts of the world, and it is necessary we should build a larger number of small vessels than foreign nations. If we should be engaged in a war, the first function of the Navy would be to maintain our supremacy at sea, and the second—in my judgment a wholly secondary duty—to protect the commerce upon the sea. So long as we have command of the sea it is easy enough to give protection to commerce, but the moment we lose command of the sea no amount of small vessels in all parts of the world would avail us. We are short of big ships, but we have a considerable excess of small vessels over foreign nations, and therefore, unless some very strong reason can be given for the contrary, I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government will consider the propriety of substituting a small number of large vessels for a greater number of small ones. The Financial Secretary stated the other night that these cruisers were to be sheathed. That means that they have to go to distant parts of the world, but they have nothing to fight there. Foreign nations sent their old or almost obsolete vessels away on such duty. When a struggle does take place it will be the nation which has the most large ships in European waters that will win the battle. That being so, we ought to strengthen ourselves in large vessels, and not fritter away our money in small vessels. Apart from that, the larger vessel is the better investment. The bigger the vessel the longer it remains an effective fighting ship; the smaller the vessel the sooner it becomes obsolete. There is another reason, and one which I urge in the interests of the Admiralty. The Colonial Office and the Foreign Office are always putting pressure on the Admiralty to send a ship here and a ship there—to hoist the flag, to protect some particular industry, to accelerate some little diplomatic difficulty. This work must be done, but there is a limit to the number of the ships which can be employed upon it. In view of the fact that foreign nations are concentrating their full naval power, this tendency to dispersion is an obvious danger in the event of our being suddenly called to battle. Big ships mean concentration, and small ones dispersion of power, and I hope the Government will carefully look into this question, and consider the propriety of some redistribution of expenditure as between large and small vessels. I apologise to the Committee for having detained it at such length. I hope I have put a wrong interpretation upon the language used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In reference to the scheme, I can only say I congratulate the Government upon having made so large an addition to naval expenditure. I hope that this addition will grow year by year, and so far as I and my friends are concerned we shall do everything, if the Government pursue that course, to help them. At the same time, I think that by dissociating their scheme of expenditure from a business-like procedure they have endangered the success of their plan, and I am sure they are unnecessarily raising difficulties in the way of consecutive administration.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, he did not rise for the purpose of making a speech, but simply for the purpose of asking a question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a very important statement as to the use which could be put by the Treasury of the balances which were surrendered. He wanted to put a concrete case. By the Naval Appropriation Account, 1892-93, as audited by the Auditor General, there was a surplus on the normal services of £131,000 odd less a deficit on other Votes of £15,000, leaving a net surplus of £115,000. The Navy Estimates proposed for last year amounted to £14,240,000, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech stated that he laid the necessary taxation on the country to provide that sum. Therefore, at that time he had in his balances at the Exchequer a surplus from the previous year of £115,000, as was shown by the Navy Appropriation account of 1892-93. He wished to know whether in laying on taxation the right hon. Gentleman allowed for that surplus, and if not what became of the £115,000?

Sir W. HARCOURT, in reply, stated that it was difficult on the spot to follow the question of the hon. Member. As far as he understood the matter he had to say that if the money was not wanted by the Navy it was surrendered. If there had been raised, say, £17,500,000, and they did not want to issue £200,000 of that for the wants of the particular Vote, they could re-vote that £200,000 which was not expended under the Vote of the year. If the Chancellor of the

Exchequer of the day had his unappropriated balance of £200,000 in hand and the Admiralty subsequently wanted that sum he was informed that the familiar practice was for him to hand over that sum for naval purposes without disturbing his Budget for the current year, and then, if necessary, the sum could be re-voted by that House. In all probability when the Budget was introduced the accounts would not have been made up, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer might not know that there was an unappropriated balance.

MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) asked, was this the familiar practice?

SIR W. HARCOURT: So I believe. To state that it is surrendered is unnecessary and involves a serious departure from our financial system. The practice is as I have stated.

MR. FORWOOD: I understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he does not know from his own personal knowledge that that has been the practice. [Sir W. HARCOURT: No.] I have pointed out here, as a matter of fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised the full amount in taxation required for the Navy Estimates of 1893-94, although at the time he had a surplus in his balances of £115,000 arising from the unexpended amounts of the previous year.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think that would be necessarily so, because at the time of the Budget the accounts would not have been completed, so that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not told at that time that there would be this money available. That is the very case in which I am saying that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not know of the amount.

MR. FORWOOD observed, that there being this balance of £115,000, probably the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his coming Budget, would not have to ask the country for the full amount of the Navy Estimates.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) said, the burden of the speech of the late Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) was that the policy of the late Government was better than that of the present Government. He would like to examine that allegation. The main difference between the financial policy of the present Government and the late Government was this: That whilst the present Government proposed that the cost of the normal and abnormal programme should be defrayed out of current revenue, the late Government bound Parliament to a stereotyped programme and a fixed expenditure of £21,000,000 in five years. But, whilst doing this, they borrowed £10,000,000 and took seven years' credit, instead of paying the whole in the five years. This, to his mind, for a Department which was able to find the cash, was short-sighted financing. What was the consequence? He held that the late Admiralty, in adopting the scheme they did under the Naval Defence Act, adopted a scheme which cost the country more than it otherwise would. It cost the taxpayers something like £750,000 more than what they would have been called upon to pay had the Government voted the money out of the annual taxation of the country. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had suspended the operations of the Sinking Fund instead of adopting an annuity scheme he would have been adopting a sound system of financial policy, but the scheme he did adopt was one which, from the necessities of the case, simply amounted to one of robbing Peter to pay Paul. With regard to the programme of the present Government involving a very large addition to the naval expenditure of the country, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not informed them of anything as to ways and means; he had not told them how the additional cost was to be paid for, whether out of the current revenue or from some other source. If he intended to ask the taxpayers of the country to pay for the additional increase in the Navy out of the annual expenditure of the country he thought that whilst it might be regarded as a policy of sound finance it would not be expedient, and for this reason: the trade of the country was just emerging from a long period of depression. This being so, the easier the Government could make the cost to the taxpayer the better for the trade of the country. The Government could borrow any amount it pleased at from 2½ to 2¾ per cent., whilst the extra £3,000,000, if drawn at once from the taxpayers, meant the withdrawal of that amount at a higher rate of interest from the trading community, and thus so much the less capital for commercial purposes

Hence, unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer had some windfall under his sleeve, he thought he would act wisely were he to suspend some of the payments due under the Sinking Fund to meet the increased cost. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman intended appropriating some of the profit which he could secure by disposing of some of the Suez Canal shares. If not, why then he said that there was no need for the Liberal Party to incur the unpopularity of additional taxation, and so interfere with trade at the very moment that it was reviving. In connection with the increased expenditure, Parliament was asked to vote an increase of £1,654,200 for contract work in shipbuilding, and for works a further increase of £270,000. Now, before confirming the Vote, Parliament must be assured that the moneys voted would be spent for the purposes for which they were voted. He said this, because he found from the Report of the Auditor General that moneys voted for contract shipbuilding purposes had been, during the past six years, grievously misappropriated, not with regard to shipbuilding only, but also with regard to works. The fact was there seemed to be in connection with naval expenditure an utter absence of financial control. It was so under Lord Northbrook's period of office, when he made the mistake of spending £1,000,000 beyond what he was authorised to do; and the same appeared to have been the case down to the date of the Report issued the other day. According to the Report of the Auditor General there was an unexpended balance of £1,231,000. They were now asked for an additional increase in the contract for the Shipbuilding Vote and the Naval Estimates for this year. Before voting this large additional sum of money he should like to know what had become of the £1,231,117, which was the amount less expended than was voted by Parliament for specific purposes—namely, for contract shipbuilding. The Admiralty, again, had spent for works £201,119 less than was voted by Parliament. He wanted to know what had become of the amount which had not been expended? He wished to press upon the Secretary to the Admiralty that this money ought to be expended strictly for the purpose for which it was voted by Parliament, and ought not to be devoted to any other purpose. He should like to say a word or two in regard to the naval policy of the Government. The naval policy of the present Government was, in some measure, a continuation of the naval policy of the late Government. The principle laid down by the late, and accepted by the present, Government, was that this country should have in ironclads double the number of that of any other Maritime Power, with a large preponderance of cruisers. They knew that if all the ships built under the Naval Defence Act, and that were now proposed to be built, were to be maintained on a war footing they would require an enormous increase in the number of men. He would like to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the Government had laid down any policy with regard to the number of men to be maintained during a period of peace, and also, if the ships were not to be kept on a war footing, what steps had been taken for the supply of the deficiency which would naturally be found in the number in the event of the ships having to be mobilised for war? He hoped the controversy on this great question was not whether this country should have double the number of battleships of any other country or of any other two countries, for he held that the Government of the day should satisfy Parliament that so far as the Navy was concerned it was not a question of double this or double that, but one of supremacy. Unless they could be assured that the policy of this country with regard to its Navy and its necessary appendages was one of supremacy, they would always have, every now and then, a panic. Supposing in the case of the next European war they were not absolutely supreme, in all probability this country would be called upon to pay a war indemnity of £100,000,000 or, perhaps, £1,000,000,000, and, therefore, he held that the expenditure of £2,000,000, more or less, on the Navy, for the purpose of maintaining their supremacy, was the safest and cheapest insurance in which this country could invest. In ascertaining what ought to be the strength of the Navy this would, in a large measure, depend upon the foreign policy of the country. He should like to ask the Government whether they considered that this country was to maintain its position in the Mediterranean as a European Power, and if they were, as a European Power, to be supreme over any other Power and over a combination of Powers? He held that their position in the Mediterranean at the present moment was not what it ought to be. To his mind, it was not a question of whether they had double the number of ships of the French or any other Power in the Mediterranean, but it was a question of being so supreme that in the event of war their power would be undeniable and overwhelming. This was not the case, to his mind, at present. In his opinion, the French had a much larger Mediterranean Squadron than England. But this was not the only point of comparison in favour of France. The French had a fortified base from which, in the event of war, they could direct operations, with this advantage: that they had any number of docks, which were equipped with all modern appliances, sufficiently large to permit of the docking and repairing of 15 or 20 ships at one time, whilst they had also the further advantage of having no difficulty with regard to fuel. At any time, in the event of an European war, France could have her fuel supplies carried overland to the ships lying in the harbours. On the other hand, all that England had was Malta, where the harbour accommodation was not nearly sufficient for the requirements of the large fleet they were bound to maintain for the purpose of retaining their power in the Mediterranean. Again, the harbours in Malta were not equipped with modern appliances, and they were lacking in other essentials. With regard to fuel arrangements in case of war, whilst the French could obtain coal without one voyage, they, on their part, would have to convoy coal from this country to the Mediterranean. Perhaps it might be said that in case of need their squadron could fall back upon Gibraltar. What good would that be? To fall back upon Gibraltar as it was at present fortified would be to tumble into a fool's paradise. The Government proposed this year to spend £1,000 in extending the mole and £1,000 in commencing a dock at Gibraltar. Commonsense told him that the expenditure of these small sums when such vast interests were at stake was mere child's play. If they were to maintain their position in the Mediterranean, Gibraltar must have not only a safe mole, but there must also be a large graving dock at the entrance to the Mediterranean. The Government and Parliament must face this most important factor. A dock must be made at the end of the Mole Parade 900 feet in length, or there must be two docks, one 500 and the other 400 feet long, capable of docking two large ships or half-a-dozen small ones. Then, in addition, there must be space for all the large plant necessary for repairs. To make preparations for merely painting a ship's bottom was absurd. He wanted to know what preparations were being made at Gibraltar for plant, engine, boiler, and heavy cranes which were necessary in the repair of ironclads? Unless the dock was to be fully equipped with modern appliances it would be of no use whatever. Then, to complete the supremacy of Great Britain in the Mediterranean, there must be another refuge in Cyprus. Why did Lord Beaconsfield secure this island for the country? It was so that it might be used as a base for the Navy. The harbour of Fumagusta ought to be at once dredged and made a strategical harbour and place of refuge and rendezvous for their ships. With a powerful dredger this could easily be done, and at a small cost. He held that unless they were prepared to abandon the Mediterranean they must have supremacy in their base. They must have Gibraltar to prevent the egress and ingress of hostile ships in the event of war, Malta as the Central base, and Cyprus to guard the route to the Dardanelles and the Canal. With regard to the naval programme of the Government, if what he had indicated—namely, supremacy in the Mediterranean—was their policy, then double the number of only two—say, the two leading—Powers was not sufficient for their purpose. Having said so much with regard to the policy he considered necessary in the Mediterranean, he now desired to say a few words upon the programme itself. The building programme of the Government involved, to his mind, a very large expenditure. The largest amount of expenditure was that which was proposed to be expended on large ironclads. He had always taken objection to the building of large ironclads. The loss of one of these vessels meant the sacrifice not only of much human life but of an enormous amount of property. Under their armour belt they were liable to be struck by shell or torpedo, and if the mechanical apparatus by which their guns were worked became disarranged they were no better than mere logs of wood in the water. The only argument urged in their favour was that they presented a better platform on which to work the guns. When they talked of a better platform, what was the platform displayed in the Bay of Biscay the other day by the *Resolution?* It was perfectly true that experts had said the *Resolution* was a safe ship, but here was what was said of her by one who was on board—

> "With a maximum angle of stability of 38 degrees she rolled 42 degrees in moderate weather, and when fairly in the gale we dared not turn round for fear of going over. Tons of water, moreover, came below, and at one time there were five feet of water in the engine-room. In short, a first-class battleship, with 700 men on board, had the narrowest escape of sharing the fate of the *Captain*, and, as it is, the ship is dangerously strained and leaking from the effects of one gale."

That certainly did not go to prove that these large ships had a better platform. Suppose they had been at war, and the *Resolution* had been attacked by a vessel of the *Rurie* class in such condition of weather, it was clear that she would have been at the mercy of her enemy and must have been destroyed. He would like to read to the House the opinion of the late Hobart Pasha with regard to ships. Hobart Pasha had considerable experience of naval fighting during the Russo-Turkish War, and he wrote a letter regarding the position of the Navy to Lord Brassey. This was what he said, and he had experience—

> "What we want are small, heavily-armed, fast vessels, as it were, vessels that will hop round their enemy like a cooper round a cask, hitting him on every vulnerable point, shelling his decks at long range, and worrying him to death. Of course, small vessels would be liable to hard knocks now and then; but you cannot go to war in kid gloves."

They had naval officers of considerable experience who held the same views. He contended that before the Admiralty decided on building such a large number of these huge battleships they ought at least to have given reasonable and careful consideration to what had been done, and the lines of policy followed by other countries. All other countries were discarding these huge ships. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted to-night that the programme might be altered if it were found that other maritime nations had begun to discard huge vessels. The Americans had always been looked upon as go-ahead people, who were not slow to adopt modern appliances, whether in guns or ships, but they were not following the example of this country with regard to these huge ironclads. The other day the Americans launched a vessel called the *Indiana*, of 10,000 tons, and in an article in *The New York Herald* the conditions and qualities of the two classes of ships were compared, and what was said was this—

> "Mr. Clowes shows the superiority of our 10,000 ton battleships over those of the British 14,000. The *Royal Sovereign's* heavy guns must be brought to the fore and aft line for loading, while the *Indiana's* can be loaded in any position."

He should like to ask whether any improvement with regard to the bringing of guns in a position for the purpose of being loaded had recently been made in the new ships that were to be laid down, and whether each gun would be supplied from an independent magazine, or whether the ammunition would have to be brought from a distance? In his view, the huge ironclads were only good for coast defence. Some of them could not be sent farther than Gibraltar without requiring to coal, and no system had yet been devised by the Admiralty for coaling ships at sea. He would venture to recommend the building of a second-class of colliers, partly armed, so as to defend themselves against attack. In his view, the vessels that could carry the most coal would be those which would win in future warfare. It was all very well to compare our numbers of ships and guns with the number of ships and guns possessed by other countries, but what we wanted was efficiency. He desired to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he considered that the condition of the Navy of this country, in regard to 30 or 40 of our ships which were armed with muzzle-loading guns, was in such an efficient condition as the Navy of a Power such as Great Britain ought to be placed in? The muzzle-loading guns on board our men-of-war were no better than scrap-iron, and the whole of them ought to be removed. Another reason for their removal was that they were not of the same pattern, and could not interchange their ammunition in case one ship or another ran short. Defects of that kind ought to be removed by those responsible for the efficiency of the Navy regardless of expense. With regard to the question of manning, he thought that during the last 10 years 15,000 permanent men had been added to the Navy at a cost of £1,250,000 per annum, and the present Board were proposing a further increase of 6,800. He held that before increasing the permanent forces of the Navy they ought to organise the Naval Reserve. The Naval Reserve for the protection of the Mercantile Marine were not used as they ought to be. This enormous increase to the number of men would add greatly to the annual expenditure of money, and the Government ought to endeavour to effect their object by a less expensive scheme.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.) said, he considered he should be neglecting his duty to his constituents if he did not enter a strong protest against the action of the Admiralty in completely ignoring the claims of Haulbowline to a share in the contemplated shipbuilding expenditure. Of the £17,000,000 which were about to be voted for the needs of the Royal Navy during the current year the taxpayers of Ireland would contribute at least £1,200,000, and yet it was not proposed to build as much as a gunboat at the only Government dockyard in that country, and while over the sum of £4,000,000 was to be appropriated to the requirements of the dockyards of Great Britain a paltry £5,000 was considered sufficient to meet the wants of the only Irish dockyard. Or to put the case more plainly still, out of each £100 contributed by Irish taxpayers towards the present Naval Estimates £99 12s. 6d. would be spent in Great Britain, and the remaining three half crowns would be expended in Ireland.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: There is none being expended in Scotland.

CAPTAIN DONELAN, continuing, said, the persistency with which the claims of Haulbowline had been invariably slighted and overlooked by successive Boards of Admiralty was the more extraordinary and inexcusable when it was borne in mind that over £600,000 of public money had been sunk in building this dock and basin, and when it was also remembered that this dockyard was situated in the finest and most commodious harbour in the United Kingdom. In view of those facts, he thought it was very much to be regretted that the Admiralty had not applied—as he had suggested in the form of a question—£2,000 or £3,000 of those £17,000,000 in furnishing Haulbowline with a building slip for the construction of a small class of vessels. A step in this direction would have been very much appreciated by the Irish people, because it would have shown that the Admiralty had begun to recognise that something was due in that respect to the Sister Island, and it would also have been a very graceful way of marking the recent visit of the Chief Secretary for Ireland to the dockyard. While, however, he felt called upon to make that protest, he willingly admitted that the present Admiralty Board had done something—indeed, he might say had done a great deal—to improve the condition of Haulbowline, and they had succeeded to a certain extent in rescuing it from the derelict and abandoned state into which it had been allowed to fall and remain by the late Government. He, therefore, appealed with confidence to the courteous Secretary to the Admiralty to give some assurance that he would take a further step in the right direction, and that just and reasonable claims of Haulbowline to a share in the proposed shipbuilding programme would be fairly re-considered by the Admiralty.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; Committee counted, and 40 Members being found present,

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, that in consequence of the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to revoting, he felt compelled to make some remarks on behalf of the Public Accounts Committee, of which he was a Member. The right hon. Gentleman's remarks somewhat surprised him and other Members of the Public Accounts Committee, and induced him to state what they understood to be the financial principles governing the House of Commons. Suppose at the end of the year there was a balance of £200,000 on the Shipbuilding Vote unexpended, what became of that balance? It was, he contended, surrendered to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and applied to the reduction of the National Debt. No doubt such a balance would represent some work not done or some liability not discharged; but that liability of an administrative or executive character would have to stand over to the following year, and then would have to be added to the liability of that year, and upon the sum total of such liability the Estimates would be submitted by the Spending Department to the House, the Votes in Supply being passed accordingly. This process was guarded by the issues from the Exchequer, which were under the control of a Parliamentary officer—the Comptroller and Auditor General. In the case of an unexpended balance it followed that there must have been an issue under the authority of the Comptroller and Auditor General. If the issue was not made by the 31st of March it would not be made at all, as the Comptroller and Auditor General would not allow it to be made—he would regulate the issues by the Parliamentary Votes, and by those alone. If the money was not issued by the 31st of March to the Spending Department it would never be issued at all. That seemed to him and the members of the Public Accounts Committee about the most elementary doctrine that could possibly be propounded, and they would not have ventured to give expression to such a truism had it not been for the extraordinary statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer with respect to re-voting. Whatever might be the experience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to public accounts—and possibly the right hon. Gentleman might say he was not an authority on these subjects—at any rate, the Secretary to the Admiralty was as good an authority as there was in the House on the matter. He (Sir R. Temple) had had the honour of serving under the Chairmanship of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) for several years on the Public Accounts Committee, and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to rise in his place and say whether the doctrine he (Sir R. Temple) had ventured to submit was correct or not. If it was said that chapter and verse should be quoted inasmuch as he had ventured so positively to contradict what he understood—perhaps erroneously—to be the doctrine of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer he would refer the Committee to the National Debt Sinking Fund Act of 1875. Section 5 said that if there should be for any financial year

> "a surplus of income above expenditure for that year the Treasury shall in the course of the next financial year cause the amounts of such surplus, which may be called the Old Sinking Fund, to be issued under the Consolidated Fund,"

and so forth. The sub-section went on—

> "The Old Sinking Fund as above described shall be issued to the National Debt Commissioners, and shall be applied by them within six months of the issue thereof for the purpose of redeeming or paying off any one or more of the following descriptions of debt."

Then the section ended with what seemed to the Public Accounts Committee to be a sort of extra guard in the matter—

> "But the Old Sinking Fund shall not be applied in paying off any loans borrowed under any Act,"

and so forth. There might be other Acts bearing on the point. They had not had much time for searching, and there might be some further Statutes or Treasury Regulations which confirmed the doctrine he had ventured to lay down. At all events, that doctrine was confirmed by the Statute he had quoted. In order to ensure that this Act was complied with the House had appointed a Parliamentary officer, who was well-known—namely, the Comptroller and Auditor General. The House appointed every year a Committee to consider the Auditor General's Report, and generally to see on behalf of the House that these laws were complied with. They would have thought, under all these circumstances, that nothing could be more explicitly provided for by a Parliament in any respect. In confirmation of this, it was notorious that in the contract branch of the Shipbuilding Department it often happened that the sums provided for had not been paid to the contractors. He believed that his right hon. Friend the late Secretary to the Admiralty would confirm him when he said that it had always been a matter of anxiety at the Admiralty that money should not be lost—that the contractors should complete their work and get their money within the financial year. He did not say that they had been improperly anxious, but they had always been properly anxious in the matter. It was a sad thing to think that money which might have been applied to expediting the construction of war vessels might have to be surrendered to the Commissioners of National Debt for reducing the capital account. If the doctrine he had laid down were not in full effect and force, what would be the reason for this anxiety? Whence all these fears? For this, and for no other reason—that the Admiralty were well aware that if the money could not be properly expended before the 31st of March it would be lost to the great Spending Department altogether. Among the many good reasons for the Naval Defence Act was the prevention of these surrenders, so that if money could not be spent as provided within the year for shipbuilding it could be placed into the fund established under the Act and would not be lost to the Navy. The doctrine he had laid down was perfectly clear, and what, therefore, became of the doctrine of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he talked about unexpended balances being re-voted? The money was not there to be re-voted; and if it were, and were dealt with in that way, the Treasury would be instantly pulled up by the Comptroller and Auditor General. To carry out its own Rule the House had provided a double check; so that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer used his argument to show that the Naval Defence Act was not needed he (Sir R. Temple) ventured to controvert his statement. If the money was not to be surrendered, and not to be lost to the Spending Department there must be a Naval Defence Act, or something equivalent to it, otherwise the surrender necessarily took place, and there was no other way of preserving the money for the service of the Admiralty and the Navy. He hoped he might be excused for these observations, but it certainly seemed to him that this explanation was called for by the extraordinary argument used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*Mr. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, he had given notice of his intention to move the reduction of the Vote by £2,579 for the salaries of five dockyard chaplains, but he would content himself with calling attention to the matter. He did not wish to interfere with the vested interests of the gentlemen who might now be enjoying their salaries as chaplains. They, no doubt, were entitled to expect that the length of the appointments to which they looked forward should not be in any way curtailed, and he did not desire to interfere with those gentlemen holding their appointments during the unexpired portion of their term. But he thought he was entitled—in fact, bound—to call attention to what seemed to him a way in which the public funds could in the future be justly and properly saved. Dockyard Members were not looked on with favour by the House, because they were always asking for money out of the Public Exchequer; but here was an occasion on which a Dockyard Member rose in order to attempt to save a sum to the National Purse. Hon. Members might have a kind of impression—the public generally, perhaps, had a kind of impression—that dockyard chaplains devoted themselves to the spiritual care of large numbers of men. They were looked on, probably, in the same way as chaplains of regiments, of workhouses, and of prisons. But, as a matter of fact, dockyard chaplains had little or nothing to do. The men employed in the dockyards lived in the town, and the town was well served, of course, not only with parish churches but with numerous places of worship, and all dockyard men had their spiritual wants provided for in the town. The only possible people for whom the dockyard chaplains were entertained were perhaps half-a-dozen of the highest officials who lived within the dockyard walls. These persons might possibly consider it necessary for their dignity to go to a church or chapel of their own, and to be administered to by a chaplain of their own, but except in the interest of half-a-dozen individuals no work save one or two services on Sunday could fall to the lot of these chaplains. If they were to interfere so as to earn their money, so to speak, by looking after the spiritual welfare of the dockyard labourers they would immediately come into contact and competition with the legitimate ministers of the district. The

Church of England clergymen of the district would be the first to resent and repudiate all interference amongst their own flocks by the dockyard chaplain. He would suggest that if it was considered necessary that Sunday services should be performed in the dockyard chapel for the benefit of the Admiral Superintendent, and, perhaps, three other dockyard officials, it would be possible, instead of paying a dockyard chaplain somewhere about £500 a year, to allow a local clergyman £100 a year or £150 to appoint a curate to do the work for which curate parochial duties could be found during the week. He trusted that someone representing the Admiralty would promise that some inquiry would be made into this subject; that these sinecures would not continue in the future as in the past, but that as the terms of office or service of the chaplains in occupation ran out they would not be renewed.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee) said, that perhaps he might be allowed to deal with the question so modestly introduced by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Pembroke Boroughs. He need hardly say that he should be doing himself great injustice if he concealed his personal sympathy with the object the hon. Member had in view. Speaking for the Admiralty, he might safely say that the inquiry which had been asked for would certainly not be refused. But the hon. Member raised a much larger question than he was aware of, and that was the disestablishing of the Church, not only in the dockyards, but elsewhere. The hon. Member dealt only with the five chaplains in the home yards, but the Estimates provided for nine chaplains, and if he undertook inquiry it would include the nine chaplaincies; and it seemed to him that in principle it would extend to the whole system of chaplaincies in the Navy and in the Army. Some time ago he stated, in answer to the hon. Member for Northampton, that the cost of the ecclesiastical system in the Navy was £33,253, and the corresponding expenditure for the Army was £58,160. If once an inquiry of this kind was begun it could not very well be kept within the limits laid down by the hon. Member, and that was what he meant when he said that the hon. Member had raised a large principle. He was not sure whether any saving would be effected by the arrangement suggested. The chaplains of the home yards were not in receipt of full pay altogether, but of a special allowance, as they were clergymen who had retired from the ecclesiastical services of the Navy, and all that would be saved would be the difference between their present allowance and the retirement allowance to which they were entitled from the Navy, which was very small. Altogether he was sorry that his hon. Friend had raised the question; but, so far as it had been raised, and within the limits to which it had been confined, he had only to repeat the assurance which he had already given his hon. Friend—that the matter was receiving attention.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, the Debate had so far continued on the financial part of the question that it was with some hesitation that he brought it back to the actual construction of ships, of which he might say he knew something. A great deal had been said about the way the money was divided, and also as to whether it would have been better to pass a Naval Defence Act for five years, or that the money should be provided each year; for the work intended to be done in that particular year. But if the Government were really serious in their programme, and if they really meant to carry out the additions to the Navy which they talked about, there could be little difference between a programme for five years such as that provided by the late Conservative Government and a programme provided for each separate year. The great question for the country was that the Navy should be sufficiently strong to meet all the necessary requirements; that it should be sufficient to meet the Navies of any two countries in the world combined, and that under any circumstances whatsoever, or any complications that might arise, we should be able to hold our own. The programme sketched out by the Government was one that had met with the approbation of both Parties in the House, and also with the approbation of everyone in the country who took an interest in the subject. Possibly, it was not the less popular because it professed on the face of it to do considerably more than it actually performed.

For instance, there was no doubt that the *Magnificent*, for which the Government had taken credit this year, belonged really to last year. Although he agreed with the programme of the Government for strengthening the Navy, he did not know that he was altogether satisfied from the shipbuilders' point of view with the particular ships and the particular models and dimensions of them which the Government proposed to construct. Some time ago a very lengthened discussion on the subject was inaugurated by his Colleague the hon. Member for North Belfast, and he was replied to by the hon. Member for Cardiff. A discussion of that sort was too technical to interest the House, and he did not intend to go into it again. He wished to say, however, that he was not willing to agree in all respects with what his Colleague the hon. Member for North Belfast had suggested as to increasing the length of ships. One thing that struck him in the discussion was that while the hon. Member for North Belfast discussed what would be the best model for steaming ships, the hon. Member for Cardiff went entirely on the point as to what was the best model for fighting ships. He thought that whatever was the best model with respect to the dimensions for the Mercantile Marine, the same dimensions would hold good in the Navy, though there were, of course, other contingencies that must be considered in the construction of a man-of-war. Vessels in the Navy must be fully qualified as fighting ships, but, at the same time, he thought the question of steam power should be well considered by the Government. If we were a Power like Russia, and could concentrate our ships for the defence of our coasts, and had not to look after colonies all over the world and commerce all over the world, then possibly it would be right to give all our attention to the fighting power of our ships. The noble Lord who was the First Lord of the Admiralty in the late Government took the view that we should be supplied with fighting ships concentrated in the Channel to defend our coasts in the case of a possible attack. With that, however, he did not agree. We had too many interests all over the world to abandon altogether the question of the steaming qualifications of our ships. Questions such as how much coal a ship could carry and with what speed it could go were of enormous importance, considering that we had interests to protect all over the world, and he would press on the Admiralty that in their present programme, or any future programme they might devise, they should give that matter their most serious consideration. That brought him to the question as to how far they were justified in throwing the whole programme of construction on the officials of the Admiralty. He knew those men were thoroughly competent for the work. He knew of no one better qualified for designing or constructing a battleship than the present Chief Constructor of the Navy, and that gentleman was not only advised but controlled, to a great extent, by the Lords of the Admiralty, and naval men of experience. He had no doubt that, in their way, they gave the Chief Constructor of the Navy their best assistance; but he had always found that, when people were engaged in a certain business, they were reluctant to receive control from the outside, and they were prone to imagine that they were the only people who knew anything about the business. It would be a great advantage to people engaged in mercantile construction to get advice from people who were similarly engaged, and, therefore, he thought that the suggestion that a Committee, or a Commission of some kind, should be appointed to superintend the naval programme of the Government, and to give their opinions on the plans drawn up by the Admiralty, was one that was well worthy the consideration of the Government. There were many points of a ship which could be improved besides its points for offensive and defensive purposes. He was not fit to give advice with regard to fighting ships, because that was not his business, and he had nothing to do with guns and armour; but so far as the principles of construction were concerned, he believed that if the suggested Commission were appointed great advantage would follow from having on it men who were engaged in the Mercantile Marine. Then there was the question as to whether it was desirable to continue the transport ships between this country and India, or hand over the work of transport to ships of the Mercantile Marine. It was now some years since those transport ships were built, and he did not believe any ships in the Navy had done their work so well. But they were now outworn, and the time had come for the Government to make up their minds whether they would build other transport ships or adopt the plan of chartering ships of the Mercantile Marine for the work when required. He doubted whether any ship of the Mercantile Marine would break down four times in succession on the voyage to India as the *Malabar* had done. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty had said that the ship had worked for 26 years; that she had done her duty well and ought to be excused now. But the right hon. Gentleman had not told them that it was not the ship that had broken down, but the engines, and that though the ship was 26 years old, the engines were put in about six years ago, and yet, despite that fact, the ship had broken down four times in succession. The right hon. Gentleman had also told them that it cost £6 more to send a transport to India than to charter a Mercantile Marine ship for the purpose. It would be a great mistake for the Government to build more transport vessels, especially as the Mercantile Marine had greatly changed since the time the transport ships were built. In those days the Mercantile Marine vessels capable of conveying troops to India were very few in number, whereas now the Government could get any number they liked. The gallant Admiral the Member for Eastbourne had urged that the advantage of the transports was that they afforded a capital training for the men employed on them. But he thought that if the money devoted to transports were spent on coal in sending ships like the *Resolution* to sea in bad weather, there need be greater advantages to the crew than were derived from training in transports. The hon. Member for Middlesbrough, who he was very sorry to see was not in his place, had made strong charges about the treatment of men in the Navy. He had mixed a great deal with men in the Navy, but he had not the personal knowledge which would enable him to contradict the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, though he was fully convinced from what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty and from other hon. Gentlemen of experience in naval affairs, that those charges of under-feeding and ill-usage could hardly be borne out by facts. The hon. Member also said that we would have to go to the Mercantile Marine to recruit our Navy if any sudden emergency arose; and the hon. Member regretted—a regret in which everyone would join—that so many sailors employed in the Mercantile Marine were not Englishmen, but foreigners. There was, however, a great deal to be said in excuse for British shipowners, who preferred to employ foreign sailors rather than sailors of their own country. There was no doubt whatever about it, that the foreign sailors cost less than the English sailors; but besides that, the foreigners were more amenable to discipline, and, above all, they were not subject to those continuous strikes which interfered with the men of this country. He would not enter into the question as to whether the strikes were justified or not; but he should point out that the hon. Member for Middlesbrough had been connected with the getting-up of more strikes than any man in the country; and when the hon. Member considered that one of the results of those strikes was the employment of foreign sailors in preference to British sailors, perhaps he would cease to complain of the action of the shipowners. If the Government carried out the points he had suggested they would win general approval.

*Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) said, in a multitude of counsellors there was said to be safety. No one would dispute that there were a large number of counsels given in that House as to the way in which our ironclads should be constructed; but with all this advice our ironclads rolled over, turned turtle, and went to the bottom of the sea. He did not know anything about the construction of ironclads, but he did know that there was a great deal of unsatisfactory work carried on in our dockyards under the control of officers who knew very little about mechanical matters. He was convinced that the mistakes made in the dockyards would not be made in any private workshop. He particularly wished to say a few words about the treatment of the Naval Reserve men in the Island of Lewis. Before doing so, however, he should like to refer to the observations which were made on Tuesday night. The Member for St. George's (Mr. Goschen) was premature in his remark that no Member below the Gangway on that side of the House objected to this large naval expenditure. He objected to this enormous expenditure. But what was his position? He was between the devil and the deep sea.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: Which is the devil?

Mr. WEIR said, if he voted with the Opposition the interests of the constituents he represented would be ignored for another six years, while if he stood by the Government there was, at least, some chance of getting them to improve the state of things now existing. With regard to the Naval Reserve men, those in the Island of Lewis stood A1, but their treatment was bad. He could only account for it by the fact that they were so far removed from London—some 750 miles. They were, in his opinion, unfairly treated by the Naval Authorities, and badly looked after by their officers. These men, as the hon. Member for Eastbourne had stated in the House only a short time ago, formed the very best class from which our Navy could be supplied. No better men for our ships could be found anywhere than the fishermen of the North, who, he submitted, would be willing enough to join the Navy if a fair inducement to do so were offered them. He strongly endorsed the remarks made by that hon. Member, to the effect that the Admiralty should exhaust the supply of respectable fishermen before they took sailors from the slums of the East End and the dock population of our large seaport towns.

*Sir E. J. REED (Cardiff) said, he wished to say a few words in reference to some remarks which had been made by his right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty with regard to some statements he had addressed to the House on the buoyancy of ships of the *Admiralty* class. His right hon. Friend had represented that the advantage of this class of ships was recognised by the Committee presided over by Lord Dufferin.

*The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, in reply to the hon. Member for Cardiff, the suggestion of Lord Dufferin's Committee was in favour of the concentration of armour on the citadel as distinguished from the ends of the ship. He had not said that Lord Dufferin's Committee recommended ships of the *Admiral* type, but a concentration of armour on the citadel. His hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland asked a question as to whether any policy had been laid down by the Admiralty as to the number of men in the Navy in time of peace and in time of war. On this point he would refer the hon. Member for Sunderland to the opening portion of his statement made on March 20, wherein this question was fully dealt with, both as to permanent list and Royal Naval Reserve, and when he explained that the matter had been well considered by the Manning Committee of the Admiralty. The points mentioned were not being overlooked; they were the subject of close and careful consideration by the Admiralty. As to the greater need of harbour and dock accommodation in the Mediterranean, the Admiralty were alive to the necessity, as was shown by the steps that were being taken to improve the harbour and provide a dock at Gibraltar. The question of large and small ships had been discussed with great ability by hon. Members on both sides, but he must refrain from entering into consideration of the subject that evening. The Admiralty had also been giving close attention for some time to experiments for coaling ships at sea. A considerable advance had been made in this direction, though he admitted that much still remained to be learned on that subject, and it would therefore be necessary to carry those experiments further. It appeared to be thought that battleships and men-of-war could not get from one port to another without coaling at sea, but he reminded hon. Members of the remarkable fact that the *Royal Sovereign* steamed from this country to Gibraltar at an average rate of 15 knots, and at the end of the voyage had burned only one-third of her coal. The fact showed how much advantage was gained by that large coal capacity which it was, and had been, the policy of the Admiralty to provide in our ships. He would leave the question as to the efficiency of that part of the Navy which had muzzle-loading guns in the position in which it had been left after the answer of the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty, to which he had nothing now to add. The hon. Member for East Cork had raised the question of Haulbowline. But it was not the policy of the Government any more than it had been the policy of the late Board of Admiralty to convert Haulbowline into a building yard. It was their opinion that there were enough building yards already, and they did not propose to establish another at Haulbowline. They were continually making it more efficient if they could for the repair of ships. They were anxious to continue that policy and to increase the appliances, so as to make the yard more useful. His hon. Friend had suggested that Ireland had not a fair share of expenditure of money. With regard to that, he could only say he regretted that the Irish firms were not more successful in obtaining contracts; but he congratulated Ireland on the fact that it had obtained an important contract in connection with one of our ships. The late First Lord of the Admiralty, judging from his criticism that evening, appeared to be a little difficult to please, if he would forgive him for saying so. Last year the noble Lord criticised the first-class cruisers, and now, when the Admiralty proposed to construct a number of second-class cruisers, he also criticised them. The noble Lord apparently wanted something between the two. He had indicated that there were newer types in the Admiralty programme, and he must ask the noble Lord to wait a little; but he was glad to find that generally the proposals as to the *Talbots* and the *Powerful* and the *Terrible* had met with the approval of the Committee. It had been asked what became in past years of money not spent on contracts. He was not responsible for anything before the end of August, 1892, but before that time money not spent had either been diverted to other Votes with Treasury sanction or surrendered, and to say that there was an utter want of financial control was not just to the Admiralty officials. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken of the diversion of new construction money from one class of ship to another. But he would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that this might be a most urgent necessity on grounds of public security. No doubt it was desirable that the sanction of the Treasury should be obtained; but when such a step was necessary as a matter of policy, or for safety of our ships and the preservation of security and peace, a Government which shrank from the responsibility of such a change in their proposals and in the use of the money voted would be culpable; and although he agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the earliest information should be given to Parliament, a Government which, simply on a point of financial strictness, refused, from fear of being called to account, to take a step which was pressed upon them by their naval advisers, or by strategical necessity, would be wanting in its duty to the House and the country. The Government had done its duty, and he was confident that Parliament would support them. If the facts pressed on Lord Spencer's attention by his naval advisers could be fully stated to the House, no Member would hesitate in believing that it was clearly the duty of the Government to apply the money voted by Parliament towards providing a larger number of torpedo-boat destroyers than had been applied for in the Estimates. A great deal has been said against the action of the Government in spending money on new ships not provided for in the annual naval programme. I do not want to be controversial, but I am bound to point out that those who went before the present Government pursued a similar course. In the Statement which he issued explanatory of the Naval Estimates for 1888-89 the noble Lord opposite said, with reference to the advancement of ships laid down in 1887-88—

> "It was found to be advantageous for the economical employment and distribution of workmen that four ships not contained in the Estimates of 1887-88, and additional to the authorised programme, should be laid down and commenced during that financial year. Those vessels were required for special service and reliefs, and consisted of three gunboats (of the *Rattler* class modified) and a paddle steamer for surveying service."

The expenditure on those four vessels amounted to £30,000, but the gross liability thereby incurred was £150,000. It is not, therefore, open to the noble Lord or his colleagues to find fault with the present Board of Admiralty for pursuing a course on all-fours with that which their own Government adopted in diverting money voted for other purposes to the building of ships which were not mentioned in the Estimates, and for which no money was specially provided by Parliament. But I have another case to mention. What I have mentioned was done by the late Government at the commencement of their term of Office, and at the end of it they ordered four torpedo-boat destroyers, while preliminary arrangements were made for four others, the total cost being £210,000, and there was no Parliamentary authority for this liability, the greater part of which fell on future years. I do not blame the late Government for taking that course. On the contrary, I say they were perfectly right in what they did on those occasions, but, in these circumstances, it is certainly not for the noble Lord to find fault with the present Government for having acted in like manner. Reference has been made to the advantages which were derived from a Naval Defence Act in the way of speed in the building of ships, but I venture to say that without an Act of Parliament the speed of building attained under the Naval Defence Act is, to say the least, being maintained, and I hope it may be increased. The right hon. Gentleman also referred to financial irregularities at the end of the financial year in order to get rid of surplus money, and said that the Naval Defence Act diminished the risk of these irregularities. Under the efficient system of check which now exists, I do not believe there will be many more financial irregularities, and with good management the surpluses to be surrendered at the end of the year will be small. There was one remark made by my hon. Friend the Member for the Kingston Division which was not characterised by that accuracy I would expect from one who has been so long a member of the Public Accounts Committee and is now its Chairman. He seems to think that a Government Department knows on the 31st of March what is to be its surplus. It cannot know on that date what will be its surplus, because the accounts are not closed until very much later in the year, and until they are closed no one can tell what is the surplus. Sometimes it is only much later that the discovery is made that there has been an excess. As to the appeal which the hon. Baronet has made as to the accuracy of the version given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the surrender of surpluses, I think it ought to be addressed to the Treasury, and if the hon. Gentleman goes to the Treasury he will find that the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is perfectly correct. It disposes of the public delusion—a delusion which exists in the minds of some people who have been connected with the Spending Departments—that the money which cannot be spent in the financial year goes on the 31st of March of that year at once to the relief of the National Debt. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the money can be used if wanted in the course of the next financial year, and a Supplementary Vote is asked for. ["No, no!"] I have the statement here and can quote it. It assumes that a sum of £200,000 has not been spent in the year 1893-4, and is surrendered, and says—

> "But as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has provided for the full naval grants in 1894-5, it is open to the Admiralty to present a Supplementary Estimate for a re-vote of that sum of £200,000, (supposing that the Admiralty can spend that money in 1894-5 in addition to their grants for that year), without upsetting his arrangements."

I pass from that. Perhaps, as my right hon. Friend (Sir W. Harcourt) is here, he will forgive me if I use a phrase about the speech of the noble Lord opposite. I think the noble Lord began his speech with a little display of what I may call anti-Harcourt fireworks. I do not think they should be taken very seriously. He was endeavouring to make out that there was a great difference between the opinion of my right hon. Friend (Sir W. Harcourt) and that of the rest of the Government. He endeavoured to show that the programme which it had been my duty to describe on behalf of the Government had disappeared. Well, that sort of work had to be done by gentlemen who want to fire off a few fireworks. The noble

Lord asked who was to be believed—the Admiralty or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I repeat—and I am sure my right hon. Friend will approve what I am saying—that the five years' scheme has been approved of by the Government, and will be carried out by us if we have the opportunity. The discovery which the noble Lord opposite has made, that there is any unwillingness to carry out this scheme, or any intention not to carry it out, is a mere mare's nest. What the noble Lord alluded to was a mere abstract argument used by my right hon. Friend directed to this—that a Naval Defence Act might, under the hypothetical circumstances he stated to the House, be inconvenient to the Government. Upon that hypothetical case the noble Lord founded the theory that, in spite of the solemn declaration made in this House on behalf of the Government, they did not mean seriously to carry out their programme. He fell into a great inaccuracy in saying that if a Bill to alter a Naval Defence Act were sent up to the House of Lords, the Lords could do nothing but pass it. It is perfectly true that if it were a Money Bill the Lords could not amend it, but they would be perfectly able to throw it out. The noble Lord referred to the necessity of having a business-like procedure. As my right hon. Friend has already said, we have reverted to the old procedure. It is a procedure which worked well for years. There may be a difference of opinion about it, but that it is an unbusiness-like procedure I do not admit. There is one part of the noble Lord's speech into which I cannot follow him. He indulged in several guesses as to the dimensions of the programme of the Government, and entered into calculations, which were based upon those guesses, as to the postponed liability of the Government. I will only say to him: "In vain is the net spread." My right hon. Friend explained to the House that the Government on grounds of high policy have determined that it is better not to announce to the House more than what ships are to be commenced in the present year, and what amount of money we ask the House to vote. The reasons for that policy have already been given to the Committee, and I decline to be drawn into a further statement on the subject. I think I may now appeal to the Committee, considering the very long discussion that has taken place—nearly two days before Easter and two days now—to pass this Shipbuilding Vote, and to enable us to go on to discuss some very important questions that still remain to be considered on the Works Vote. It is extremely important that we should obtain the Works Vote to-night. That Vote contains a very large number of new and important proposals. None of them can be commenced until the money has been voted by Parliament. If the money is not voted now, early in the Session, valuable time will be lost during the best and longest days of the year, and on that ground I appeal to the Committee to give us the Works Vote.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, hon. Members had been told that they would have an opportunity on these two evenings of discussing the naval programme of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth), who had addressed the Committee at considerable length, had entirely abstained until the conclusion of his speech from making any reference to that programme. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) had made it plain and distinct that the Government declined to allow the House of Commons to enter into their confidence, and that they were asking the House blindfold to assent to a programme which they refused to explain. The main objection to the policy of the Government was that they intended to bind themselves simply to the expenditure that could be carried out in one year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the House of Commons had no right to bind itself beyond one year——

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg pardon, but I have been slightly misunderstood on this point. The Government have a plan extending over several years, but they will not put out of their own power or hand over to anybody else the right to deal with the programme as they think fit at any time. That is what I stated.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL said, his point was that, although the Government had a policy for five years, they asked the House to provide money for only one year's work, and would not explain what the five years' work was to be. It was, of course, impossible to discuss the naval policy of the Government with any effect if that policy was to be confined to one year.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, that after the very controversial speech delivered by the Secretary to the Admiralty (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth) and the tone in which it was delivered it was necessary that a word should be said from the Opposition side of the House. As to what had been said about the diversion of a certain sum of money by the Admiralty from one purpose to another, no one wanted for a moment to traverse the right of the Admiralty under circumstances of urgency having a free hand to extend or alter their shipbuilding programme, but it was certainly necessary that the House should be informed at the earliest possible moment of the exercise of that right. He believed the 20 extra torpedo-boats to which reference had been made were laid down many months ago during the time the House was in Session, but no communication whatever was made to the House of the intention to lay them down. What he complained of was not that the Admiralty should have laid them down, but that they should have laid them down at the cost of the more important battleships. If the extra boats were needed a Supplementary Estimate ought to have been brought in, so that the authority of Parliament could be obtained. It had been said that his noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton) took similar action. The action of his noble Friend, however, in laying down additional ships had the effect not of curtailing but of adding to the programme approved by Parliament. The six additional torpedo-boats laid down by the late Government were constructed for the experimental purpose of ascertaining what was the best class of machinery to have in them. There seemed to have been a serious misunderstanding with reference to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said concerning the Admiralty surpluses. There was all the difference in the world between having the power to use unexpended balances, and having to go to the House of Commons for a Supplementary Estimate.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not want to have any misunderstanding on the point. It has been my fault entirely that there has been any misunderstanding. When I spoke of re-voting the money, I meant re-voting on a Supplementary Estimate.

Mr. FORWOOD went on to say that he and others had understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say, when dealing with the question of the Naval Defence Act, that circumstances might arise which might make it desirable, in the interests of the taxpayers, that the expenditure which had been contemplated on the Navy should not be undertaken or should be postponed. The whole object of the Naval Defence Act was to prevent any Chancellor of the Exchequer being able to interfere with expenditure on the Navy owing to any change of financial policy. He had clearly understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to allude to the possibility of being able to reduce the expenditure on the Navy as one of the advantages of not having a Naval Defence Act.

Mr. COHEN (Islington, E.) did not think the Secretary to the Admiralty had thrown any light on the very startling doctrine laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the money voted one year, and unexpended in that year, could be applied in relief of expenditure of a cognate character in the ensuing year. He wished to point out that under the Act of Parliament, 38 & 39 Vict., c. 45, the Treasury had to pay surpluses over to the National Debt Commissioners. He would like to know what possible connection with this matter any Supplementary Estimate could possibly have? A Supplementary Estimate was simply to defray any extra cost incurred during that financial year. The Committee would be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would tell them whether their view was correct, and how the discrepancy pointed out by his hon. Friend in the past financial year had been properly met under the Act of Parliament?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he had already explained the Supplementary Estimate, and did not think he could usefully occupy the time of the House in going further into the matter.

Mr. COHEN pointed out that the Vote would not be supplementary unless it were taken before the 31st of March.

Vote agreed to.

2. £2,294,000, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c.—Materiel.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) said, it had been his intention to make some inquiry as to the character of the armour-plates provided for ships now building, but as he understood that the House desired to proceed to another subject, he would not press the point now if the Secretary to the Admiralty would place him and the House in possession of evidence that the result of the test to which the armour had been put in this country was satisfactory.

*Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH said, he would be very happy to give the hon. Member any information in his power. The experiments with regard to armour had been fully considered, and the hon. Member would find that the results were satisfactory. Other facts could be stated showing that the very best description of armour suitable for the ships had been adopted.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS was well acquainted with the document referred to, and the conclusions there arrived at were emphatically traversed in official communications made to the United States Government.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the hon. Member was quite right in saying that the House wanted to know something about the matter. The arrangement come to was that the Government should get the Dockyard Vote and the Vote for Works by 12 o'clock, and there was still an hour and a half for discussion.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he had been asked to take the Mutiny Bill at an early hour, and he hoped that the Votes might be taken by half-past 11, so that the discussion on that Bill might commence then.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, considering the peculiar circumstances under which this great programme was brought before the House, he thought it was a great concession to give the two Votes mentioned by the end of the evening; and, knowing that some of his hon. Friends wished to speak on three Votes which involved an expenditure of £4,000,000, he did not see how the discussion could terminate by half-past 11. If the Government preferred to leave over the second Vote in order to take the Army Bill at half-past 11, he was quite ready to agree to that course.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he had made the appeal to the House, because he observed that nobody except the right hon. Gentleman rose to speak on the Vote before the Committee. If the Vote was taken now there would still be an hour for the discussion of the remaining Vote. But he did not desire to press the matter against the wish of the House.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS said, he was quite prepared to go on now. What he had to say was upon a matter of considerable importance, but it would not take long.

Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN understood that the Army (Annual) Bill could be taken at any time after 12 o'clock. It had been so laid down by the Speaker.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, it was distinctly understood that the Army (Annual) Bill would be taken at an early hour, and half-past 11 could not be called early. He trusted the Government would give some indulgence.

Mr. HANBURY confirmed the statement of his hon. Friend. The promise was that the Bill would be taken at a reasonable hour. Half-past 11 was not a reasonable hour, quite apart from any question of pledge given.

Mr. POWELL WILLIAMS said, he thought it would be admitted that if any mistake was made by Her Majesty's Government in this matter the consequences would be very serious, and the Committee might well expend a little time in considering them. If Her Majesty's ships were to be armed with plates which the guns of other countries could pierce, and if British guns could not pierce the armour plates of foreign ships, it would be much better not to build any more ships, but devote the money to some other purpose. The total additional cost for Harvey nickel-steel plates was only 2 per cent. He had no interest in nickel, but there could be no doubt as to which was superior. America, Austria, France, and probably Russia, after the most exhaustive tests, had adopted nickel-steel Harvey plates. He referred the Committee to the report in *The Times* of a lecture delivered by a staff officer of the Austrian engineers, where it was stated that the nickel-steel plates were the best now known. That was also the verdict of an officer of the United States Navy. It was shown that nickel steel Harveyized had always given better results than plain steel similarly treated, and that the nickel steel was undoubtedly the best for naval purposes. Yet it was plain steel plates which the Government had adopted for the new vessels of the Navy. An Official Report recently made to the United States Government of experiments with plates composed of two kinds of steel stated that unquestionably the nickel plate Harveyized was the best armour plate ever tested. In France, also, similar experiments had been made, and the results, according to a Report from the Creuzot Works, which he could show the right hon. Gentleman, were of a like character, and strongly in favour of the nickel steel. The Committee had heard from the hon. Member for North Belfast, in the discussion on the Navy Estimates, how errors had been previously made in connection with our ships of war through our Governments neglecting to take advantage of the results of experiments in foreign countries, and he feared the Government might fall into error in regard to the armour-plates for the new ships unless they had the most certain evidence that the description of plates they had adopted were the best they could obtain for the purpose. He had been informed that the Government had given orders for armament in connection with the new vessels to certain makers of armour-plates. Experiments in connection with armour-plates were very expensive to a private manufacturer. The Government could not expect a private manufacturer to adopt more expensive means for the production of other kinds of plates when he could sell those for which he had the necessary means of production and as long as the Government continued to buy them. The difficulty of finding manufacturers in this country who could do in regard to experiments what some foreign manufacturers were now doing had probably had something to do with the decision at which the Government had arrived with regard to armour-plates. But if this decision had been adopted for the sake of saving only 2 per cent. in the cost of the construction of the new ships and at the expense of real efficiency, a great mistake had been made. At any rate, looking at the vast importance of the subject, he felt that he had no need to make any apology for having called attention to the subject, especially in view of the facts which he had brought under the attention of the Committee.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) rose, not for the purpose of taking part in the discussion of the subject raised by the hon. Member for South Birmingham, but to say something with regard to the course of business that night. The Government were very anxious indeed to obtain the Votes in the Navy Estimates which had been under discussion, and also the Works Vote, which it was desirable, for peculiar reasons, to obtain as soon as possible, at an early period in the evening. In order to secure this he was quite prepared to postpone the Army (Annual) Bill, and thought it was the best course.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman meant that the Army (Annual) Bill would not come on that night at all?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes.

Vote agreed to.

£4,650,000, Works, Buildings, and Repairs at Home and Abroad.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said that, as had already been stated by the Secretary to the Admiralty, this Vote contained very many new works of importance, and the same criticism was applicable to it which had already been extended to proposals for shipbuilding and new construction, that the amount taken in the present year was altogether below the proportion it should bear to the total amount of money to be expended. This Vote was even more remarkable in that respect than the Shipbuilding Vote. As had been pointed out frequently in the course of that Debate, in the Shipbuilding Vote only £1,360,000 was to be expended during the present year, and taking a large number of the more important items of the works voted, the House would scarcely credit it, but it appeared on the Estimates, that out of items of new works amounting to £4,048,000, there was only £122,000 down in the Estimates for the coming year. That disproportion was utterly absurd. It justified the charge which he brought on the previous night, that these naval proposals both for ships and other works were more in the nature of a public advertisement that the Government proposed to do something for the Navy than in the nature of a real, practical and feasible programme. For dredging there was £950,000 proposed, only £85,000 was to be spent this year. That was, he thought, about one-twelfth, but that was the most favourable of all the items to which he had referred. Take the case of home barracks, put down for £350,000, only £1,000 was to be spent during the coming year. The thing was absurd. Take the case of the Keyham Basin and Docks, the importance of which was generally admitted ; £2,000,000 was put down in the Estimates, only £1,000 was to be spent in the coming year. Again, the proposal was absurd. Take the case of the two extensions of the mole at Gibraltar, one was to cost £85,000 and the other £320,000. For the first, £20,000 was taken, and for the second only £1,000 was taken. For the most important proposal of all—namely, the proposal to construct a naval dock at Gibraltar, £360,000 was to be taken, and only £1,000 was put down in the Vote of this year. Of all these items, amounting to £4,048,000, for new works, to suppose that only £122,000 was to be spent in the coming year was to reduce the Estimates to a practical absurdity. In fact, the Government had thrown at their heads as many proposals as they could in this way in order apparently to get credit for their nominal proposals, and really devise no practical arrangements for carrying them out. The House had already heard a very instructive dispute between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty on the one hand, and the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty and the late Financial Secretary on the other hand, and at one moment they had heard the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty denouncing the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston, and reproving him because as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee he had made an unjust criticism on the financial arrangements of the Government. The next moment the Chancellor of the Exchequer got up and threw over his colleague, in despite of his egregious reference to anti-Harcourt fireworks, and explained that the mistake was his. They understood from the result of the dispute between these gentlemen, and the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, that there was no practical provision for these works, either in shipbuilding or in the construction of new dockyards and barracks, arranged by the Government for the future. He wished to ask a few questions in regard to the new dock at Gibraltar. They understood that the dock was to be constructed by excavating a space out of the New Mole Parade, and it was the opinion of the late Board of Admiralty that that was the most economical site, and the one which offered the best protection from attack by sea. There was no doubt that a dock cut out of the New Mole Parade would be practically safe from shells fired from the open sea, and very largely protected also from attack from a south-westerly direction. Of course, there was no position on the western or the south-western side of the Gibraltar rock which could be protected from land fire. He would like to hear something from the Civil Lord as to the extensions of the mole. It was well known that all the naval authorities regarded the extension as of first-class importance. It was necessary in these days, when there would be torpedo attacks, that there should be some shelter provided for our ships. He understood that the existing mole was to be lengthened by 1,200 feet, and that the cost of the work would be £85,000. He supposed the lengthening was to be in a straight line with the existing mole. Two thousand feet of protection would give shelter to a considerable number of the vessels of the Mediterranean Squadron. There was some information wanted with regard to the second extension, which was to cost £320,000, of which only £1,000 was taken in this year's Estimate. He understood this second extension was in reality to take the form of a separate mole, and he desired to know whether that mole was to be constructed in a straight line with the existing mole, or whether it was to be constructed transversely? Then, he would ask the Government whether they were satisfied that it could be used as a mercantile coaling station? Every hon. Gentleman who had visited Gibraltar was well aware that its importance as a coaling station was increasing year by year. He thought the last Return showed that 700,000 tons of coals were shipped during the last year on board vessels of the Mercantile Marine at Gibraltar. This coal was stored in a number of old hulks scattered about the upper portion of Gibraltar Harbour, and in case of war these hulks could be easily destroyed by an attack from two or three hostile torpedo-boats; and it was of the utmost importance that some arrangement should be made, now that Gibraltar was to be recognised as a great naval dockyard, for the coaling, not only of men-of-war, but of vessels of the Merchant Navy. If there was proper coaling arrangements at Gibraltar there was no doubt that a much larger number of vessels would call there in future than at present. He did not say that was altogether desirable, regarding Gibraltar as a naval and military fortress, but it was necessary, having regard to the inferiority of our Mediterranean Fleet, that in case of war the squadron should retire upon Gibraltar for reinforcements. Undoubtedly any great naval conflict of the future would take place in waters close to Gibraltar, and if we lost command of the Mediterranean our merchant ships would not be able to proceed to India and the Far East through the Mediterranean, but must go down the West Coast of Africa, and take the old route to India and the East. That consideration gave importance to Gibraltar not only as a workshop, but it would give to it vastly greater importance as a secure and efficient coaling station for our Mercantile Marine. That, he thought, must be perfectly clear to every Member of the Committee. He did not propose to trouble the Committee any further with regard to this question. He congratulated the Government that they were making a beginning with this important matter, and he only wished they had seen their way to spend more money than the infinitesimal sum of £1,000. He would rather have seen a slight diminution of the proposal for new shipbuilding if they could have succeeded in advancing the works at Gibraltar; but he would be content with urging upon the Government the great importance of the considerations he had laid before the House.

*MR. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, he thought he was justified in taking up a short space of time in order to bring before the Committee and the country the extraordinary way in which Pembroke Dock had been neglected by the Government. He had no desire to deprecate the spending of money on other dockyards, but he did want to urge upon the Admiralty that they ought to spend more money in the development of Pembroke Yard. He was very much struck by a remark made by the late First Lord of the Admiralty, when he said we had only three ports—Chatham, Devonport, and Portsmouth—and he wondered whether the noble Lord knew that Milford Haven could swallow up the three and think little of it. Milford Haven, with its depth of water and position on the coast, was a port of refuge of the first importance. The capacity of the dockyard for the building of ships was very great, but the facilities for the completion and fitting of new ships and for the repair of injured ships were very small, and there was a want of proper jetty accommodation. The Hobbs Point Jetty was situated three-quarters of a mile from the dockyard, and the whole of the material required for fitting up a vessel, and the whole of the men employed in completing a vessel, had to be taken backwards and forwards in order that the work should be done. That was so much wasted time and money. All the machinery which had to be put on board a ship after launching had to be brought first to the dockyard and landed there, and then had to be reloaded on barges and taken to Hobbs Point, there to be put on board the vessel. This was a case of enormous waste of time and money. Again, the power of the sheer legs at Hobbs Point was not sufficient to put the largest boilers into vessels, and the consequence was that a vessel had on one occasion, and probably others would have on other occasions, to be sent away elsewhere to have the work done. All these matters were perhaps tiresome in detail, but they were at the same time matters of practical importance, and matters in respect of which a good deal of money would be saved if the dockyard was put into a thorough state of efficiency. The necessity of these works had been admitted and sanctioned by successive Governments since 1884, but nothing had been done. He thought the Committee would agree with him that a matter of this kind was one to which the attention of the Government ought to be drawn.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, that in view of the fact that the Vote had to be taken that night, he thought the Government ought to reconsider their position and give the Committee some information as to the immense works which were contemplated upon these vessels. They were being made liable for an enormous sum. That sum of £4,000,000 was to be taken, and there was very little information in the statement issued by the First Lord. He thought the Admiralty ought to tell them what was intended to be done. The Committee was asked to hurry this Vote through without anything like sufficient information. The Government could not complain of the hours that had been devoted to it. Here there were a number of items in respect of which they had no information. If they were really necessary why was so little money taken for them? Something had been said earlier in the evening as to liabilities imposed by one Government upon its successors. He must say that, so far as these liabilities were concerned, they would come upon them in future years to a very large extent, and how they were to be carried forward he did not know. The total amount for new works was £4,000,000, and it was stated that £129,000 was to be taken in this year. All that might be necessary or not necessary, and possible or not possible; but he thought they ought to know from the Government whether it was absolutely necessary to begin the works this year, or whether the execution of them could not be delayed until the actual money for them could be found. He much doubted the utility of taking such small sums of money for such large undertakings. Supposing the expenditure was spread over 10 years, it would be a sum of £400,000 in place of the £129,000. Now, it was said they had left certain legacies to their successors. When they left Office they left a liability of uncompleted works of £650,000, but if the present Government went out of Office in the present year they would leave for their successors about £4,500,000, which was a very large sum, and, therefore, Members in all parts of the House would think they were entitled to call attention to this. What he asked for now was that, at all events, the Government would give them some explanation as to these matters—whether they thought them so absolutely necessary that they must be begun this year with these small amounts, or whether the whole question ought not to be allowed to stand over until such years when the money could really be found to complete the work. It appeared to him almost to be playing with these large undertakings to put down such very small sums as were put down for the present year, and he was surprised that more attention should not be given to works of this magnitude which involved such large amounts. The Admiralty would understand he did not dispute such works were indispensable, but every fair-minded man would acknowledge that they were entitled to more information.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee) said, he rose at once in response to the appeal made by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down to give an explanation of the new items in this Vote. One remark made by the right hon. Gentleman he would like to revert to at once. He assumed that the Admiralty had only put down such works as they believed to be indispensable in the sense that they should be commenced at once, and that such progress should be made this year as could be made. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that was the principle on which the Admiralty had acted; this Vote, large as it was, they had cut down to the narrowest limits which they believed compatible with the safety of the Empire, and not a single item appeared that they did not believe was justified by the necessities of the case. In making what remarks he had to make he might revert to the questions put to him by the hon. Member for Sheffield. The hon. Gentleman, like the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and like the late Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, had fastened on this peculiarity in the present Vote, that while the total liabilities involved in it were very large the amount taken this year was comparatively small; they had all fastened on that and demanded an explanation. He did not know whether the late First Lord made that proposition.

Lord G. HAMILTON: No, I did not.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, he thought not, but the explanation of it was this. First of all, the Works Vote was a peculiar Vote, they could not begin any large new work without the sanction of the Treasury. Nothing could be done until that had been obtained, and that would not be given for large sums until sanctioned by the House of Commons, so that the Works Vote every year had this peculiarity—that the large works could not be commenced until sanctioned by a Vote of the House, and those who were responsible for the drafting of the Vote knew it might be very late in the year before the sanction of Parliament was obtained. The sanction of Parliament for this Vote last year was not obtained until the 20th of September, and it was a vast improvement upon previous years that they were allowed to take this Vote to-night. His second observation was that in new works they had, in addition to the delay which might be caused by the postponement of the Parliamentary Vote, a vast variety of preliminary operations that took up time, such as the preparation of plans, the taking out of quantities, the issuing of tenders, the visits of contractors to the site of the works, and the time taken for the consideration of the tenders, and when all that was done and the tenders had been considered and accepted, there were only two or three months left in an ordinary year for the contractor to work in.

Mr. FORWOOD: May I ask if the plans for the expensive large works are provided already?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, that in detail no doubt they were, but the Director was the responsible officer for all that. There was not a single item that had been reduced in consideration of any financial difficulty of the Government, or with the view of transferring to their successors any undue portion of the burden of these works. Every figure that appeared in the Estimates for the first time was placed there by the professional head of the Department of Works, and represented what in his opinion was the full amount that the contractors were likely to earn in the current year. Someone had said that to take £1,000 for the dock at Gibraltar meant taking 360 years to complete, and that the extension at Keyham would take he did not know how many thousand years, because they took as little for the enormous work at Keyham as they did for Gibraltar. He would not refer to any controversial question raised, but he would remind the Committee that much objection had been taken by the Accountant Auditor General against the practice of voting money for Navy Votes and not spending it. That was a practice condemned upon authority, and the desirability of avoiding that practice in future was another reason that no more money should be voted than they were likely to expend. He could not retort on the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues that they followed precisely the same practice, for, so far as he was aware, they did not embark upon any great works, but the late Civil Lord, to whose Department this business belonged, made a curious slip when he declared that his own Government took £1,000.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : I withdrew it last night.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, the hon. Gentleman declared it before and withdrew it to-night, but he referred to it as curious that the sum the hon. Member had in his mind was precisely the sum the present Government took. The hon. Gentleman was wrong in supposing his Government had taken it, but the sum that occurred to his mind was that sum of £1,000.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT said, he must explain to the hon. Gentleman the point he omitted last night and filled up to-night. Under the late Board of Admiralty the whole question of the Gibraltar Docks was most carefully examined by a Committee and a decision come to. It was a mistake with regard to the sum of £1,000, but he never committed himself to the idea that that was the proper sum.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, it was hardly worth while continuing the matter, it was made by inadvertence and was since explained away. The hon. Gentleman said his own Government took, two years ago, precisely that sum, and that might be used by him as an argument that it would be taken as the first time, but he need hardly say more on that point. Some one had said, "What is the use of beginning with such small sums at all?" Let him remind the Committee that even if they only took £5 a tremendous step in advance would be gained, as they would then have obtained Parliamentary sanction and would be on a new status altogether; they would be somewhat in the position of having read a Bill a second time, they would have decided the principle of the works, however small the sum taken.

Mr. FORWOOD: Will the hon. Gentleman describe how, if we are to read it a second time, £2,000,000 is to be expended this year, and what is the plan?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, he would come to that in a moment. The next thing he was asked about was for some information about the Gibraltar Dock. The dock was to be a dock of the first class, capable of holding the largest ship they had, or were likely to have.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): Cased over, or in the rough?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON believed it would be cased, and the dock would be on a line with the new mole. Then as to the mole, what was called the new mole but which was really a very old mole, that as the Committee knew was being continued, but the new work that appeared on the Estimates for the first time was the separate mole to which the hon. Gentleman had referred. The length of the new mole would be some 1,600 feet; the extension of the existing mole would be 1,760 feet, making the estimated extension the whole length 3,300 feet in the line of the present so-called new mole.

Commander BETHELL: Are these new works to be faced or rough; will they be faced so that ships can go alongside?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, they would be faced, and if the hon. Member would look at the maps it would give him more information. Then an hon. Member complained of Pembroke Dock being neglected in comparison with others. Far be it from him to say anything disrespectful of Milford Haven, but he must remind his hon. Friend of this—that these items were not, and ought not, to be determined by considerations of favour to one locality—that was entirely out of the question. It was a matter of proper consideration for the Admiralty. Acting on the advice of their professional advisers, they had placed the proposals before the House, and if Pembroke was omitted it was because other proposals were greater than could be made on behalf of Pembroke, but he could assure his hon. Friend that what he had said would not be lost sight of when occasion arose for making further proposals. He now came to the other points put to him by way of question across the Table. The most important work of all was the extension of Keyham Yard. They proposed to build that yard, and the work would extend over a period of 10 years. They proposed to build three docks of the first class.

An hon. MEMBER: Wet or dry?

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, they would be three draining docks of the first class, one entrance dock of the same capacity, 41 acres in area, eight tidal basins, certain steam-ship buildings, stores, wharfage, shops, and so on.

MR. FORWOOD: For ships to go in, or only for light vessels?

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, they would be for ships to go alongside of, but he was not quite sure.

***SIR E. HARLAND** (Belfast, N.): May I ask the length of the dock?

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, the three docks were to be of the size of accommodating the largest ship, that was all he could say.

MR. FORWOOD: Shall we have an opportunity of seeing them?

MR. E. ROBERTSON supposed so. This extension of Keyham Yard was a proposal that came to them on professional advice, and they were assured it was work that ought not to be postponed.

***LORD G. HAMILTON** said, it was understood this Vote would be taken to-night, and he would not detain the Committee, but this Vote they were asked to consent to did commit them to enormous liabilities. He believed the expenditure that was contained in the Estimate was necessary, and it was essential if this work was to be begun the Committee should give its consent to-night, nor did he object in certain instances to small sums being taken for big work, but the peculiarity here was there were such large numbers of big work in which case small sums were taken, and however anxious they might be to help the Admiralty the broad fact remained that by this Vote the proposal was to take fresh liabilities on their shoulders in addition to an existing liability. It was quite clear that to carry this work out a large increase in the Estimate would be necessary in subsequent years, and he would suggest that the hon. Gentleman should circulate some Paper so as to give an idea of what the financial arrangements were. One hardly liked to commit oneself to so large a share of liability unless one saw the means by which the money in subsequent years was to be raised. Whatever increase there might be in the Vote this year there must be a large increase in following years. He thought they ought to know that, and it would be advisable that other works should be mentioned that were to be commenced in the next few years. He saw no allusion to Hong Kong, and something must be done there within a year or two. Another thing was that a great deal of this expenditure was connected with stationary defences, and he would therefore ask, was this a joint scheme of the War Office and the Admiralty? Of course, under the circumstances, they assented to this Vote, but he did not think the explanation, such as it was, satisfactory; but if the hon. Gentleman would undertake to lay before them a document with further information it would do much to allay their objections.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, he considered the demand of the noble Lord for a detailed statement was reasonable, and he hoped, after further consideration, that he might be in a position to comply with the demand of the noble Lord. He admitted the fairness of the noble Lord's conjecture, that in future the expenditure must be increased larger than it was at present, but however large the business in the future might be, the sum they proposed to take this year was very large as compared with the sums taken in years past; in fact, for a quarter of a century he did not think any Board of Admiralty had proposed to take so much.

MR. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest) said, before the matter was settled he would like to ask for some explanation of the making of a breakwater at a cost of £140,000 when the money might be better utilised.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, he did not think the hon. Member quite understood the present proposal, which was not to make a breakwater to form a harbour, but to lay down "dolphins" at the entrance of the present dock in order to prevent any hostile torpedo-boats coming in.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow, at two of the clock; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.
(No. 84.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*Mr. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which he said was in effect the same Bill as that which was before the House last year and the year before, and twice read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lees Knowles.*)

An hon. Member : I object.

*Mr. LEES KNOWLES said, it was not yet 12 o'clock.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, if it was not yet 12 o'clock he would like to ask for an explanation as to whether the Bill had met with the approval of the Government ?

*Mr. LEES KNOWLES said, that last year the Grand Committee on Trade adjourned the consideration of the Bill in order that a Minister from the Local Government Board might be appointed a member of the Committee and give advice and assistance from that Department. The Parliamentary Secretary was appointed, but unfortunately he was unable to attend.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday next.

LAND ACTS (IRELAND).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

Sir E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) : I object.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland what he intends to do with regard to this Motion, in face of the persistent opposition of the Tory Party to the appointment of the Committee ?

*Mr. SPEAKER : Order, order! Objection is taken to the Motion.

Mr. T. M. HEALY : I will ask the question on the Adjournment of the House.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 2) BILL.
(No. 6.)

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed] ; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Statute Law Revision Bills, &c.,—That they have appointed a Committee of Six Lords, to join with a Committee of this House, to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session ; and request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) [ADVANCE].

Resolution reported ;

"That it is expedient to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the fund of the suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland under any Act of the present Session to authorise an advance out of the general fund of monies belonging to suitors of the Supreme Court in Ireland for the purposes of the Library used by the Bar of Ireland at the Four Courts, Dublin."

Resolution agreed to.

LAND TENURE (IRELAND) BILL.
(No. 7.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL.
(No. 112.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 2.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

BUILDING SOCIETIES (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Bill to amend the Building Societies Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Asquith, and Mr. George Russell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 157.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (CODE), 1894

Copy presented,—of Code of Regulations for Day Schools, with Appendices (1894), of the Scotch Education Department [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) (EVENING SCHOOLS) (CODE), 1894.

Copy presented,—of Code of Regulations for Evening Continuation Schools, with Schedule and Appendices (1894), of the Scotch Education Department [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND).

Copy presented,—of Special Report of the Board in relation to the Athlone Provisional Order, 1894 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented,—of Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance, Nos. 1347 (Algiers) and 1348 (Honduras) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, he wished to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, in view of the action of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Guildford on previous occasions, and the action of the hon. Baronet the Member for West Belfast to-night, with regard to the Motion affecting the Select Committee on the Irish Land Acts, he intended to make, or hoped to make, or saw any advantage in making, this Motion. Hon. Gentlemen opposed this Motion, although the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester had said that if the form of Reference was amended there would be no opposition. But a very valuable Bill had now been read a second time, and it became a question whether later on in the Session an opportunity could be found for discussion of the matter, and a day's discussion in the House would be a great deal more valuable than a great many days upstairs in Committee. He would ask the Chief Secretary, therefore, having regard to the importance of the Bill, and to the opposition of hon. Gentlemen, whether there was any advantage in persisting with the Motion?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he differed from the hon. and learned Member for Louth in thinking that a day in the House on the Bill would be more valuable than many days in Committee upstairs. He hoped the Chief Secretary would not make up his mind hastily to relinquish a proposal which was approved by every party in Ireland. He himself deeply regretted that an Irish Member should at the last moment oppose this Motion, and risk a proposal, the loss of which would certainly give rise to a great deal of excitement in Ulster, and might lead to results which the hon. Baronet and he might have cause to deplore.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I readily join with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth in deploring the painful want of discipline on the other side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, as I said more than once yesterday, distinctly invited me to modify the Order of Reference in the way in which I have actually modified it, and promised——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Hoped, not promised.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The right hon. Gentleman certainly invited me to modify the Order of Reference. I presumed that the right hon. Gentleman did not throw out that invitation in a mere empty form, and that it carried with it a promise that the right hon. Gentleman would do his best to get that form of Reference accepted. [Mr. A. J. **Balfour**: No, no.] Well, I withdraw the word "promise," but that is my interpretation of what the right hon. Gentleman said, and in view of that I consented to cut down the Order of Reference, and to put it on the Paper in the form in which it now stands. I will require a little more time to consider the course I will take, but if gentlemen opposite persist in refusing to have this Committee appointed—a Committee which I believe all Parties in the House and all Parties in Ireland desire—then, of course, I will have to consider whether it is worth while to persevere in making the Motion. I have been making the Motion in one form or other ever since the Session began. I would much prefer that the Committee should be appointed, as, in my opinion, it is far the better way of dealing with the subject, and that the Bill which was passed yesterday with only eight Irish Conservative votes against it should be referred to it. I assented to the Second Reading of that Bill, assuming that this Committee would be appointed. I will not say more to-night, but the matter is becoming rather serious, unless the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition can bring some influence to bear on his colleague on the Front Bench, and on the hon. Baronet behind him.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : A personal appeal has been made to me by the right hon. Gentleman which I cannot ignore. With regard to my hon. Friend who sits on this Bench with me, and to whom reference has been made, of course he does not act as an ex-official, but as one concerned in certain Irish interests, and acts on his side precisely as the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Healy), who so vociferously interrupts, acts on his.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL : But he does not represent an Irish constituency.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : But I will not occupy the time of the House in discussing the position of my hon. Friend. Leaving that out of account, a personal appeal has been made to me, and I have been told that in the House I had given something in the nature of a personal pledge that I would exercise my influence to obtain the appointment of this Committee with the reduced Order of Reference which now stands upon the Paper. That is perfectly true, and at the time I made that statement, and until the events of yesterday, I was of opinion that a Committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act of 1881, now that the end of the 15 years' term is approaching, would not be an inexpedient Committee to appoint. But, after what took place yesterday, when a Land Bill was read a second time, I do not now see what is to be lost by a couple of hours' discussion before the Committee is appointed. Of course, if progress on the Bill is to be suspended until the Committee has reported, well and good, but if we are to carry on concurrently both an inquiry upstairs in Committee on Irish land and legislation downstairs on Irish land, it will be a proceeding little consistent with the dignity of the House. If the Bill is not to be proceeded with until the Committee has reported on the points of the Bill, then I will hold to the opinion I expressed a few days ago, and agree that the Land Act of 1881 is a proper subject for Parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): The hon. Baronet the Member for North Belfast has not condescended to explain his position or the motive of the surprising action he has taken. The hon. Baronet must be well aware of the proceedings in reference to this Motion. He must know that the Chief Secretary has time after time conceded the substance of the Amendments which have been put down on the Paper to the Order of Reference. The Chief Secretary excluded inquiry into the Land Judges' Court and into the Purchase Acts, and he limited the scope of the inquiry to the first part of the Reference. The hon. Baronet must be aware that the Leader of the Opposition in the House the other day, when the Chief Secretary conceded the form of Reference suggested, made it abundantly clear that in his view the nomination of the Committee would not be opposed, and on that understanding the Chief Secretary put the Order of Reference in the form in which it now appears. It is strange that the Tory Party, which has always boasted of its discipline—it is strange that Members of that Party should resist the appointment of a Committee the terms of Reference to which were agreeable to the Leader of the Party to which the hon. Baronet and the Member for Guildford belong. I fail to see how the fact that this House has affirmed the principle of a Bill on the Irish Land Question has altered the position of a Motion for the appointment of a Committee in such a way as to render discussion on the appointment of that Committee more necessary than before. I should have thought that the fact that the House had passed the Second Reading of a Bill would have rendered discussion on the appointment of a Committee less necessary, because the subject has been cleared up by the Debate of yesterday, and if there was a case for the appointment of the Committee, that case has been rendered more apparent by the Second Reading of the Bill to which I have referred. The Leader of the Opposition, whose ingenuity is never at a loss on the spur of the moment, threw out a suggestion to-night that there might be no resistance to the appointment of the Committee if it was understood that the Bill would be referred to it. Might I remind the House that the Bill is now in Committee of the whole House, and I must say for myself that I am not altogether prepared to assent to the proposition that the Bill should be referred now to a Select Committee? The Committee has only to make a limited inquiry into the details of the practice of certain officials in Ireland, and if it were appointed and proceeds with expedition, there is no reason why it should not complete its inquiries by Whitsuntide. If that is understood, we have no objection to postpone the consideration of the Bill until after Whitsuntide. But I am not prepared to assent to the view that a Bill which has been read a second time, and on which the House has gone into Committee, should be referred to a Committee upstairs. At any rate, whatever may be the opinion of the Tory Party in reference to the Committee, we shall claim our right at a convenient stage of the Session to ask the House to make progress with the Bill.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said, that after what had been said by the hon. Member for Kerry he would ask his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition whether, having regard to the results of the opposition to this Motion in Ireland and in the Province of Ulster, he did not think that there should be no further opposition. The Member for Kerry stated that he did not propose that legislation should take place until the Committee had reported, and he had further

stated that the Committee would report earlier than he had thought they would. After that statement, he would appeal to his right hon. Friend to use his influence with the Member for Guildford and with the Member for North Belfast, with a view to withdrawing their opposition to the appointment of this Committee, which, if persisted in, would bring about results in Ulster that they would regret.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Do I understand the hon. Member for Kerry to say that he is prepared to postpone legislation until the Committee has reported?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Let us hear from your friends first. Let us hear from the hon. Member for North Belfast.

Mr. SEXTON: We think that the Bill should proceed this Session, but that the proceedings of the Committee should be so compressed as to admit of that being done.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have been asked to use my influence with hon. Members on my side to secure the appointment of the Committee, seeing that the hon. Member for Kerry on his side has engaged that there shall be no legislation until the inquiry has taken place. I understand the view of the hon. Member for Kerry to be that the Committee should be appointed and should report before Whitsuntide. I do not see how a Committee of the House is to go through such a difficult, complicated, and tangled subject in three weeks.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: It will not be possible to proceed with legislation while the Committee is sitting.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If that is so, I have no objection to the appointment of the Committee.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Can we hear what the Member for North Belfast has to say on the point?

***Sir E. HARLAND**: I am quite prepared to withdraw my opposition provided the suggestions of my right hon. Friend be accepted.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 13th April 1894.

INDIAN SALT LAWS.

OBSERVATIONS.—QUESTION.

*Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY called the attention of the House to an article, called *A salt hunt in Orissa*, in *The Pioneer* of about the 9th of November last; and asked if the Secretary of State for India would renew the Orders issued by Viscount Cross against prosecutions for trivial infractions of the Salt Laws; and whether the quantities of consumption of salt per head of population given in the Official Salt Report included the amount of salt consumed by cattle? He said, this was the first opportunity he had had of congratulating the noble Earl the late Secretary of State for India on having reached the Foreign Office, which last year he had told the House was a haven of rest as compared with the India Office. India was also to be congratulated upon the arrangement being brought to a close under which British work was paid for by the Indian Treasury. India, however, gained more in theory than in practice, and it was one of those victories which are said to be equivalent to a defeat, for it had pleased Her Majesty's Government to hand over the destinies of India to tyros, or "griffins" as they were called in India. It was difficult to understand why the India Office had been put under the right hon. Gentleman, whose chief claim to administrative genius had been shown in the Parish Councils Bill. Not satisfied with this choice, Her Majesty's Government had contemplated removing the permanent Under Secretary and depriving the Secretary of State of the experience which Sir Arthur Godley had acquired during several years. Fortunately for India Sir Arthur Godley had preferred to remain at the India Office. Her Majesty's Government had, however, shown that they did not altogether disregard Indian experience by the selection of the noble Lord the late Governor of Bombay as Parliamentary Under Secretary. That noble Lord had fulfilled his term of office with credit to himself and advantage to Bombay. It was, therefore, a matter of surprise that the noble Lord was not at the head of the India Office, and that an Office which required more labour and attention than the Foreign Office should have been entrusted to one whose time would be so much taken up with the weary attendance in another place. The only conceivable explanation was that Her Majesty's Government had been afraid of the Member for Northampton, and feared that another Peer in the Cabinet would exhaust his endurance. But this deference to the views of the Member for Northampton had not secured his approbation, or prevented his placing them in a minority. He hoped that his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would answer him, and not leave that task to the Under Secretary, for several reasons. It was hardly fair upon the new Under Secretary that he should on the first occasion on which he addressed the House in his new capacity have to dissemble his feelings in order to palliate harsh conduct which he could not approve. It was right that the late Secretary of State should defend his own omissions or claim credit for his own merits, as the case might be; and after speaking so often as Lord President on Indian pay it would be reasonable to expect that he should in return speak on Indian subjects on British pay; and he hoped that his noble Friend would be able to inform the House that he had anticipated the question on the Paper, and which there had been no previous opportunity of asking. The case he had to put was this: In August, 1889, he brought before the House and his noble Friend the then Secretary of State for India some cases of hardship where fines of two rupees had been inflicted upon persons who had been guilty of scraping up salt. Upon that occasion the noble Viscount said he would inquire into the matter. Subsequently his noble Friend told him that he had given orders to stop trivial prosecutions, and accordingly two or three years ago a Circular was issued in Bengal in consequence of orders from Viscount Cross forbidding prosecutions for trivial infractions of the Salt Laws. But this had become a dead letter. It appeared from the Salt Report for 1892-3 that in that year duty had been paid in Bengal on 10,138,924 maunds, and that the salt revenue obtained in Orissa from salt manufactured and imported amounted to Rs.1,773,362. Under the head of offences against the Salt Laws the Report stated that 885 maunds of salt of illicit manufacture were confiscated; the loss of duty on this amount if it was not sold would be, at 2½ rupees per maund, Rs.2,212½. Against this has to be set Rs.4,879 rewards to informers, Rs.1,776 cost of additional preventive force per annum, and, according to the Report, the preventive service in Orissa was to be re-organised at a cost of Rs.6,468 per annum. From the Report, page 15, the collector of the 24 Parganos seemed not to be in favour of searches for illicit salt, which he said was "undoubtedly an evil in itself, and extremely vexatious to the people generally." He said (page 16) the seizures were usually of very small quantities of salt, showing that it was manufactured only for home consumption. The whole quantity of salt seized in this district in the year was only 20 maunds, the duty on which would be only Rs.50. The Salt Report said (page 21) that in Orissa there were, in 1892, 2,504 cases of offences against the Salt Laws. Of these, 354 were those of persons released after a warning, 1,346 cases were written off as undetected scrapings, and 153 were pending at the end of the year. Paragraph 42—

> "It appears that 83 infirm persons, pregnant women, and children were apprehended during the year, against 14 in the preceding year."

Then (page 21, paragraph 42)—

> "There is no assurance in the case of these 83 persons, and of the nine persons released for want of proof, that there was sufficient justification for their arrest, and that they were not subjected to undue hardship."

Paragraph 45 of the Report remarked on the disparity of sentences given by different Magistrates, and said the Commissioner had been requested to arrange that salt cases in each district should be tried by one Magistrate, who should be selected for his fitness for the duty. Would it not be better that those Magistrates should be selected by the Chief Justice, rather than by the Salt Commissioners, who were interested in squeezing the largest amount possible from the Salt Duties. These dry figures from the Salt Report almost proved his case, but they did not appeal much to the imagination, and it was perhaps fortunate that a correspondent of *The Pioneer* should have described a "Salt-hunt" in Orissa, and thus filled in the vague outlines of the official document. After describing the poverty of the houses and the cooking pots on a fire in a hole in the ground in the centre of the hut, the writer said—

> "It may suggest itself to you that there can be not much scope for hiding illicit salt in such an arrangement as this. But for all that, many maunds of salt may be unearthed." . . . "A raid on a village as conducted in Orissa is a pretty thorough affair. On information received that contraband salt is being manufactured in a certain village, the salt officer makes it his duty to ascertain approximately in how many houses he may expect to obtain cases, and he takes so many men accordingly. It is no child's play this. You have to be on the spot sometimes before sunrise."

He then described the walk of 10 or 12 miles by night, the posting of men all round the village, and the waiting for daylight.

> "Suddenly the figure of a woman approaches the tank, and seeing the approaching signs of trouble, endeavours to hurry back and give the alarm. But it may not be. She is seized and told to stay quiet, and huddling herself up in her scanty clothes, she sits and weeps at what perchance may prove the breaking up of her house and home. With the sun come the first warnings of danger to the villagers. The quiet which a few minutes before reigned, disappears. Then come the battering at the crazy doors, the shouts of the men, the shrill cries of the frightened women and children, the noise of the smashing of jars, the destruction of signs of evidence, and the hustling and hurrying of the people."

The correspondent then related how a police officer would point out in a cooking room a mass of filthy black fluid in a pot, and say—

> "'If your Honour taste that you will find it very salt;' and it is very salt; search is made, and one or two, or three jars of white salt are unearthed; another police officer discovers and fishes out of the tank an empty jar or cooking pot with traces in it of salt. And so on, house after house. If the information is good and true, each house brings out its contribution, and its owner, amid cries from the women folk, is marched off to face the law."

Those who had been accustomed to see in Cheshire pans 40 or 50 feet long, burning several hundredweights of coal at a time, and comparing them with these small cooking pots, will exclaim: *de minimis non curat lex.* He would refer their Lordships to some extracts from a Calcutta paper commenting on the article in *The Pioneer*, headed, "Official callousness: an unconscious confession." It was there stated—

> "In another column will be found a heart-rending account unconsciously supplied by a precious specimen of our European Executive Service, regarding the cruel enforcement of one of the cruel fiscal laws that disgrace the present rule in India and the British Indian Statute Book. For the callous heartlessness displayed in the article we cannot possibly imagine any reasonable excuse. It might be a painful duty for some servants of the State to be on the alert and seize upon contraband salt and the tools of illicit manufacture. But they had no right to violate other laws at least as sacred as those miserable ones of which they had assumed the creation. Surely it was not their business to devastate whole villages and the homes of the people. But what shall we say of this talk of a 'salt-hunt' as if there were great fun in depriving any class of people of their simplest birthrights, and in subjecting the very *sanctum sanctorum* of their zenana to a cruel inquisition and desecration by the myrmidons of an Indian fiscal Court."

The writer proceeded—

> "From confessions made to us by some of these 'salt-hunters' themselves, we know a little of the way in which the so-called 'proofs' of illicit manufacture are brought into existence."

He feared to weary the House, or he would have liked to read more from this article, since the writer would write no more. Dr. Sambhu Mukerji had died of a cold taken at a party to take leave of the late Viceroy. When he read the article from *The Pioneer*, his first impression had been that the editor of that semi-official paper and organ of the Civil Service had been entrapped by an enemy of the Salt Laws, but he had been assured that it was not so. A proof of the scurrility of the writer who belonged to the Salt Department would be found in the beginning of his article, where he wrote—

> "One village in Orissa is very like another. . . . A neatly kept clean village with its brown houses . . . with its well-cared for 'Holy Trinity,' *i.e.*, a well, a lamp-post, and a letter box."

The words "Holy Trinity" are printed with capital letters and inverted commas. Such a reference would be an outrage in this country, and how much worse is it in India! What sort of man was the editor of *The Pioneer* to have let this pass, and what was the Press Commissioner about to have allowed this irreverence in a semi-official newspaper to have passed without a reprimand? He believed there was no longer a Press Commissioner, but there was the Article in the Penal Code. If the semi-official English newspapers did not themselves respect the religion of their country, how were they to expect the Hindus to do so? He might say more upon that point, but would forbear, because he did not wish to distract the attention of the House, or of the noble Lord who would answer him, from the impression which must have been created by his recital of these "Salt-hunts."

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord REAY): My Lords, the Salt Revenue in Orissa has since the year 1888-89 been administered by the Salt Commissioner in the Madras Presidency, and further, he has been under the orders of the Bengal Government and the Bengal Revenue Board. The Indian Salt Law is made applicable in Orissa instead of the Bengal Law. The salt consumption and the Salt Revenue of Orissa have not increased. The salt consumption in Orissa was, in 1885-86, 684,000 maunds; in 1886-87, 744,000 maunds; in 1887-88, 730,000 maunds; in 1888-89, 664,000 maunds; in 1889-90, 730,000 maunds; in 1890-91, 725,000 maunds; in 1891-92, 713,000 maunds; and in 1892-93, 703,000 maunds. In 1890 a Report was made by the Bengal Government on the working of the Madras Salt Department in Orissa, and it was shown then, that although the local *panga* salt industry had disappeared, the Orissa people consumed as much salt per head as the people of the other districts in Bengal, and about as much as the people in the neighbouring Ganjam district of the Madras Presidency. Salt in Orissa was 11 to 12 seers per rupee cheaper than in any other division of Bengal. It was then found that the Madras Salt Department was doing good work, and nothing like a salt crusade could be allowed or was needed in Orissa. Now that was the Report of the Bengal Government in 1890. In 1891 a further inquiry was instituted by the noble Viscount, then Secretary of State, and it was found that orders had been issued by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and published in the *Calcutta Gazette* to the effect that prosecutions should not be allowed against the poorer class of ryots for making small quantities of salt for home consumption and not for sale, and that,

> "Instead of hunting for these trivial cases, the police should direct their attention rather to cases of illicit manufacture for sale."

As those orders applied to Orissa no further action was then taken, and as those orders apply now it is unnecessary to issue further instructions.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: What was the date of the Orders?

LORD REAY: The exact date I cannot give, but they were issued I believe before 1891. Now there may be instances of excessive zeal on the part of some official in the Department such as has been mentioned by the noble Lord, but they are distinctly opposed to the spirit in which Government desire the provisions of the Salt Law should be carried out. The computed consumption of salt per head is obtained if the total number of pounds of licit salt consumed be divided by the total population. The consumption of licit salt by animals in India is inconsiderable and it is not deducted. An inquiry made in Burma 11 years ago, when the Salt Tax in that country was less than one-tenth of the Indian rate, showed that the people there only gave salt to some of their cattle on special occasions and for short periods of the year. I think the noble Lord will see from the answer I have given that anything like a "salt hunt" is against the wishes and orders of the Government both in India and at home.

VISCOUNT CROSS: It is not my intention to detain your Lordships upon this matter. My attention was directed to this subject in 1889-90, and I caused very stringent inquiries to be instituted in India. It was never the intention of the Home Government or of the Indian Government that poor people who are scraping together salt for home consumption and not for sale should be treated as offenders under the Salt Act. It is quite necessary, of course, that the Salt Tax should be protected wherever salt is manufactured for sale; but, as the result of the inquiries I instituted and of the action of the Government, I never heard any complaints, and I believe the practice in the matter has been as the noble Lord the Under Secretary for India has stated.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, he understood from the reply of the noble Lord the Under Secretary for India that these things had been done contrary to the Orders of the Government. That being the case, he would no doubt take care that they did not occur again. One thing he forgot to mention. From the Report it appeared there was still a matter which had not been decided upon, whether Orissa should be administered in respect of the Salt Laws by the authorities in Madras or Bengal. Of course, he offered no opinion upon the matter, but *à priori* he should say it would be much better if they were administered from Bengal, because the whole subject would then be more open to publicity.

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed for the consideration of such Public Bills as may be committed to it by the House.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:

E. Cowper.
E. Stanhope.
E. Cadogan.
V. Oxenbridge.
L. Balfour of Burley.
L. Foxford. (*E. Limerick*).
L. Colville of Culross.
L. Kensington.

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

Commons Message considered (according to Order): Moved that this House do concur in the following Resolution communicated by the Commons—namely, that it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons (The Lord Chancellor); agreed to:

Then it was further moved to resolve that it is expedient that the said Committee be the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills (The Lord Chancellor); agreed to.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith.

House adjourned at Five o'clock,
to Monday next, a quarter
before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 13th April 1894.

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

OFFENCES AGAINST THE MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade how many prosecutions were instituted by the Solicitor to the Board of Trade for offences against the Merchandise Marks Acts in 1892 and 1893, and with what result; how many prosecutions are now pending, and by what staff of Inspectors the solicitor is assisted; and whether it is sufficient to cope with the numerous cases in which foreign manufactured goods, prison made and otherwise, are sold as English, and the cases also in which foreign meat, butter, and other articles are sold as British?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): Seventeen prosecutions were instituted in 1892 and 1893; seven convictions were obtained, six cases were withdrawn, three dismissed, and there was one acquittal. Two prosecutions are now pending. No Inspectors are employed, and none were ever contemplated under the Acts.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN SLIGO.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): (1) I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that up to the present the Labourers (Ireland) Acts have been inoperative in the Union of Sligo, and that a representation was made a few years ago for the erection of cottages; (2) can he state at what cost to the ratepayers and with what result was such representation made; (3) Is he aware that at a meeting of the Sligo Board of Guardians, on Tuesday, 3rd April last, the Board refused, by 13 votes to 22, to form a scheme under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, the minority consisting exclusively of Nationalist elected Guardians, and the majority of three Tory elected and 19 Tory *ex officio* Guardians; also that the Chairman of the Board stated that he would never allow a labourer's cottage on any of his farms; (4) will he take steps to have effect given to the wishes of the elected representatives of the people; (5) and will he direct the Local Government Board to hold an inquiry at the earliest possible moment into all the circumstances connected with the applications of labourers in Sligo Union for cottages under the Labourers' Dwellings Acts, and into the repeated rejection of their representations?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): (1) It is a fact, so I am informed, that no cottages have been erected in the Sligo Union under the Labourers' Acts. A scheme was submitted by the Guardians in 1886, but fell through in consequence of an informality in the proceedings; (2) the expenses incurred by the Guardians in connection with this scheme amounted to about £120; (3) application for the erection of a number of cottages were before the Guardians on the 3rd of April, but by a majority of 24 to 13 they refused to make a scheme. The majority consisted of 17 *ex officio* and seven elected Guardians; the minority of 13 elected Guardians. The Chairman has informed the Local Government Board that the meaning of the remark he made at the meeting was that as he was himself building houses for the labourers there was no necessity for the Guardians doing so; (4 and 5) the Local Government Board have not yet received any application for an inquiry into the action of the Guardians. Such application should be made by the persons who signed the representations as required by the Labourers' Act of 1891.

IRISH DISPENSARY COMMITTEES.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the rating qualification for members of Dispensary Committees in Ireland who are not Guardians is £30; also that in many cases persons, whose appointment as members of Dispensary Committees is desired by all classes in their districts, are prevented from acting owing to this high rating qualification; and can the rating qualification in such cases be reduced without legislation; and, if not, will he take steps to have the Irish Poor Law amended by the reduction of the rating qualification for members of Dispensary Committees?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I beg to refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply which I gave to a similar question addressed to me yesterday by the hon. Member for North Roscommon.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman disposed to offer any facilities for passing a Bill on the subject?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The question of facilities trenches upon very delicate ground, and I cannot answer without consulting my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

THE BOARD OF IRISH LIGHTS.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the London Trinity House, as the General Lighthouse Authority, exercises a supervision over the Board of Irish Lights; and whether, as the latter body admits that the buoy on the Briggs Reef in Belfast Lough when its moorings are stretched to their full extent does not guard passing vessels from the danger of striking on a wreck lying on the reef, and notwithstanding has neither removed the wreck nor shifted the buoy, the Trinity House can order an investigation by an officer of their own into the matter; and, if not, what Department of the Executive represented by a Minister responsible to this House has control over the Board of Irish Lights?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The Commissioners of Irish Lights have not made the admission suggested in the hon. Member's question. On the contrary, they inform me that in their opinion the Briggs Reef Buoy, with moorings stretched in any direction, will guard vessels from striking the wreck on the reef if the buoy is passed on the proper side. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, confers on the Board of Trade power to order an inquiry in respect to the efficiency of any buoy under the management of any General Lighthouse Authority, and also gives the Trinity House power to direct the Scottish or Irish Light Commissioners to alter any buoy, provided they obtain the sanction of the Board of Trade to such direction.

Colonel WARING: Will the right hon. Gentleman order an inquiry as to whether the vessel was outside the buoy or not when it was struck?

Mr. MUNDELLA: That is not the question on the Paper. The Commissioners can only inquire in respect of the efficiency or inefficiency of a buoy, and the Trinity House have power to direct the Irish Lights Commissioners to alter the position of a buoy if they find it is in the wrong place.

Colonel WARING protested that the vessel was outside the buoy when it was struck, and added that he was in a position to say that that was so.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether a large sum of money is not voted each year to the Mercantile Marine Fund, out of which a balance is given to the Irish Lights Commissioners, and when that Vote comes before the House will we have an opportunity of discussing the constitution of the Irish Lights Board?

Mr. MUNDELLA: Certainly.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman take advantage of the introduction of the Merchant Shipping Bill to attempt to reform the constitution of the Irish Lights Board?

Mr. MUNDELLA: No, Sir; it is impossible to do so under the Merchant Shipping Act.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it was under the Merchant Shipping Act that this Board was constituted?

Mr. MUNDELLA: This Bill is a purely consolidation Bill, and to attempt to make any amendments in it would be to destroy the whole character of the Bill. The Irish Lights Board will have to be dealt with by a separate Bill.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If the right hon. Gentleman finds amongst all sections of the Irish representation such a spirit as would promise him an easy passage of any change of the kind, why should he not avail of that spirit?

Mr. MUNDELLA: As I have said, the Irish Lights Board will have to be dealt with by a separate Bill. I have no doubt about the feeling to which the hon. Gentleman has given expression, but we are pledged that the Merchant Shipping

Bill shall be purely and simply a consolidation Bill, and we must keep that pledge.

MR. CLANCY: Have not consolidation Bills been introduced into the House for the purpose of omitting certain sections of other Bills?

MR. MUNDELLA: The object of the Merchant Shipping Act is to have a real Merchant Shipping Code.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): Will the right hon. Gentleman introduce a Bill dealing with the constitution of the Irish Lights Board—a Board which does not give satisfaction to any portion of the Irish community?

MR. MUNDELLA: That is another question altogether from the question on the Paper, and I shall be very glad indeed to consider it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask whether the pledge of the Government that this Bill will be a purely consolidation Bill will extend to the refusal by the Government of any Amendments from any section of the House?

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir; I am bound to that.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE COOTEHILL UNION.

MR. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that the Guardians of the Cootehill Union have on every occasion refused the representations that have been made to them under the Labourers' Acts; that they rejected on the 23rd of February last 13 representations, and that the chairman declared that the Board of Guardians should simply pass all representations to the Local Government Board to do as they liked; (2) is he aware that a solicitor forwarded (7th March) to the Secretary of the Local Government Board a Petition, duly signed by the required number of ratepayers, which was acknowledged, calling for an inquiry under the 5th section of the amended Act; (3) will he explain why the Local Government Board have since sent no further communication as to whether the inquiry would be granted; (4) whether he can state if there is a Government grant of about £200 to the credit of this Union for the purposes of the Labourers' Act, and if that money will be unavailable for the Union until the Board takes steps to make a scheme; and (5) whether the Local Government Board have yet received the replies from the Board of Guardians for which they were waiting before deciding on the Petition for an inquiry; if so, what are the replies, and will the Local Government Board grant an inquiry?

MR. J. MORLEY: (1 and 2.) The statements in the first and second paragraphs would appear to be correct, except, as I am informed, that the Local Government Board are not aware that the observation referred to was made by the chairman of the Guardians. (3 and 5.) The Board state that they did communicate with the Guardians, calling for copies of the representations and a statement of their reasons for declining to act upon them. Some of the documents were only quite recently received and are now engaging the attention of the Board, who will lose no time in deciding as to the further steps that may be necessary. (4.) There is a sum of £170 available for the purpose mentioned, but this money cannot be advanced unless the Acts are put into force by the Guardians.

PROPOSED VETERINARY COLLEGE FOR IRELAND.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, except from Dublin practitioners, any expression of a desire for the establishment of a Veterinary College in Ireland has reached him; whether the sum of £15,000, which has been specified as likely to be required for its foundation, is to be taken from the funds of the Intermediate Education Commissioners; and as the number of students who have given notice of their intention to present themselves for examination in June is largely in excess of any previous year, whether the Board's expenditure on result fees and prizes will absorb the whole of the grant this year under "The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890"?

MR. J. MORLEY: The deputation which waited upon me in January last, urging the necessity for a Veterinary School in Ireland, was not confined to any locality or particular profession, but was representative of various classes and interests throughout Ireland. I would also point out that Parliament in 1881 contemplated the creation of a Veterinary College in Ireland, as in the Veterinary Surgeons' Act of that year express provision is made for the examination of students in Ireland whenever a Veterinary College should be established there. It is proposed to ask Parliament to allocate the sum of £15,000 as a grant in aid towards acquiring College buildings and fittings. It is not proposed to take it from the current year's residue of the local taxation duties (Customs and Excise) grant, but from the invested accumulation of that grant.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE CELBRIDGE UNION.

MR. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will he explain why, although nearly two years ago a scheme for the erection of 12 labourers' cottages in the County Dublin district of the Celbridge Union was approved by the Celbridge Board of Guardians, it is only within the present year that the Local Government Board held an inquiry into that scheme, and also on what grounds the Board then refused its sanction to the erection of 10 of the 12 cottages in question?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that in April and June of last year three schemes proposing the erection of 59 cottages were submitted to them by the Guardians of the Celbridge Union, and in September a Local Inquiry was held into these schemes by one of the Board's Inspectors. A Provisional Order is now about to be issued authorising the erection of 41 cottages. The Board state that 45 of the 59 cottages included in the schemes of the Guardians were proposed to be erected in County Dublin, and that without further information they have no means of identifying the particular 12 cottages referred to in the question.

GLASSABEG AND BRANDON CREEKS.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will suggest to the Congested Districts Board the advisability of removing some more of the rocks which still make the landing places at Glassabeg Creek and Brandon Creek, in County Kerry, dangerous for canoes?

Mr. J. Morley

MR. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board have made a boat-slip at Brandon Creek, and have removed a rock that had interfered with a safe landing at Glassabeg Creek. The Board do not at present contemplate any further operations at Glassabeg Creek, but they are about to make a protecting wall at Brandon Creek.

RATHDRUM WATER SUPPLY.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) if he is aware that the Sanitary Authority of Rathdrum has adopted a scheme for the improvement of the water supply to that town, and has unanimously decided that the area of charge should include the holdings of all parties resident in the town, but should not extend to or include the holdings of people living outside the town who could not derive any benefit from said supply; (2) whether he is aware that Dr. Stafford, Local Government Board Inspector, held an inquiry, at which 10 to 2 gave evidence in favour of the area fixed by the Sanitary Authority; (3) whether, notwithstanding this, and that the people inside the area so fixed are perfectly satisfied, the Local Government Board refuse to sanction said area, and persist in extending it so as to include people who never can derive any benefit from the scheme; (4) whether the Local Government Board have threatened to dissolve said Board of Guardians, under Section 211 of "The Public Health Act, 1878," should they fail to proceed with said scheme, and thereby cause to be levied what the said Guardians believe would be an unjust tax upon people who are powerless to protect themselves under the circumstances; (5) and if he is aware of any reason in this particular case why the Local Government Board should insist on an area of charge totally opposed to the wishes of the Guardians and ratepayers, and quite different to the areas sanctioned by them in precisely parallel cases at Tinahely, Carnew, and Clonegall?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the Local Government Board refused to sanction the area proposed by the Guardians on the ground that it would be inequitable, and they recommended that a uniform area of taxation should be fixed within a radius of about a mile from the town, giving the Guardians power to make a differential rate within such area, so that they might apportion the greater part of the rate on the residents within the town. The Board of Guardians having replied that rather than carry out this suggestion they would drop the scheme, the Local Government Board pointed out that it would be competent for anyone interested to make a complaint to them under Section 211 of the Public Health Act, and that the Board would be obliged to take further proceedings with the view of compelling the Sanitary Authority to perform their duty. The Local Government Board inform me that they do not consider that the other cases quoted in the question are in any sense analogous to the Rathdrum case ?

ALLEGED SHOOTING BY AN EMERGENCY MAN.

Mr. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, on the evening of 24th ultimo, Thomas M'Manus, an emergency man on an evicted farm at Curragh, County Limerick, while under the influence of drink, proceeded to the house of a man named William Sweeney, and, perceiving him with his wife and child in the hayyard, fired from his revolver at them at a distance of about 15 yards, although receiving no provocation ; that, subsequently, on the same evening, the said Thomas M'Manus fired at a Mrs. John O'Sullivan, and again at herself and her husband ; that on previous occasions M'Manus was charged at Newcastle West Petty Sessions for firing at Sweeney's house, and let off with a caution ; why is it that M'Manus was left abroad for a week without the police of the district taking any action, and on what grounds has he been liberated on his own recognisances to appear for trial ; what steps will be taken to prevent such attacks by emergency men on defenceless people ; and will inquiries be made into the composition of the Bench at Newcastle West, as well as the manner in which the police perform their duty in protecting the people when assailed under such circumstances ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I am informed by the District Inspector of Police that on the 24th ultimo M'Manus did fire shots on the farm on which he is a caretaker, but that he did not fire at the persons named in the question, nor was he drunk on the occasion. On the following day he was taken before a Magistrate and allowed out on his own recognisances till Petty Sessions on the 6th instant, when informations were refused by the Resident Magistrate, the Local Magistrate having previously left. The evidence given at Petty Sessions by the parties who prosecuted was, I understand, contradictory, and this no doubt influenced the Magistrate in arriving at the decision to refuse informations. In October last a charge of firing at the person was preferred by Sweeney against M'Manus, and on that occasion also the Magistrate, a local Justice, adopted a similar ruling. I have called for the depositions taken at Petty Sessions on the 6th instant, and will have them laid before the Attorney General.

Mr. M. AUSTIN : In connection with this matter, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman what was the cause of the delay with the police taking action in this matter, and also what was the reason of Sergeant Monday, of Knockaderry Police Station, going to these people and asking them to take no action but to merely issue a summons ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I do not know whether the sergeant did what my hon. Friend alleges. I am certainly not acquainted with the other particulars of the case, not having received the depositions, and I am not, therefore, sufficiently informed to be able to answer the question.

Mr. SEXTON : Was any hint given in the evidence why this man fired off his revolver seven or eight times, and would the right hon. Gentleman inquire whether recommendations for the improvement of this Bench of Magistrates were made to the Lord Chancellor when he entered into Office, and that no appointment has been made since that ?

Mr. DARLING (Deptford) : Is it not a fact that M'Manus is now actually under recognisances to appear for trial ?

Mr. T. M. HEALY : No.

Mr. J. MORLEY : He was under his own recognisances to appear at Petty Sessions on the 6th instant, but then the case was heard, and it was dismissed by the Magistrate. In answer to my hon. Friend, I beg to say that, so far as the appointment of Magistrates goes, I am not sure how it was why the Lord Chancellor did not appoint Justices for this Bench. As to the reasons which induced M'Manus to fire off his revolver or gun seven or eight times, I really cannot say what they were. I am told it was merely a discharge into the air, and not a firing at the person.

Mr. SEXTON : Is the licence to carry a revolver to be left in his hands ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : That, of course, is a point which I shall examine into when I have the materials.

Mr. M. AUSTIN : Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire if the Magistrate who presided at the trial is not also the agent of the property concerned ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : That could scarcely be, because the Resident Magistrate alone presided.

Mr. M. AUSTIN : Will he inquire whether the land agent acted in his Magisterial capacity on the occasion ?

[No answer was given.]

WEST CORK POSTAL SERVICE.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.) ; I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that all the Representative Public Boards of West Cork have passed resolutions in favour of a more efficient postal service, and the Postmaster General has refused to grant it owing to the Cork, Bandon, and South Coast Railway Company having refused to facilitate the transit of the mails by giving a more convenient train than the evening one which now carries the mails, he will use his good offices with the Railway Company referred to and request them to convenience the business people of West Cork by facilitating the sending of the mails by a train to leave Cork at midday ?

Mr. MUNDELLA : I am afraid the Board of Trade have no power to do anything in this matter. As I understand it, the terms offered by the Railway Company are such as the Post Office do not feel at liberty to accept, and we cannot compel the Company to alter them.

LADY VISITORS FOR FEMALE PRISONERS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a passage in the Fifteenth Report of the Commissioners of Prisons in which they endorse with their appoval the opinion of one of their most experienced chaplains that it is desirable to secure the services of one or two lady visitors for each prison in which women are confined ; and whether, by issuing a Circular to Visiting Justices, or otherwise, he will take such steps as may result in the admission of such lady visitors to a large number of prisons which are at present unprovided with them ?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. George Russell, North Beds) (who replied), said : It is not at present the intention of the Secretary of State for the Home Department to increase the number of lady visitors to prisons.

Mr. PICKERSGILL : I did not ask for an increase in the number of lady visitors, but that where there are no lady visitors they should be provided.

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL : The Secretary of State sees no reason for issuing a Circular.

CIVIL SERVICE ABSTRACTORS.

Mr. FISHER (Fulham) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that a considerable feeling of discontent has been caused by the refusal of the Civil Service Commissioners to pay to abstractors and assistant clerks certain moneys which they had earned as bonus during their previous service as Civil Service Writers ; whether any, and, if so, what, steps were taken by the Civil Service Commissioners, in the absence of specific inquiries, to warn the men concerned of the loss they would sustain if they accepted their new appointments during the course of a bonus period ; and whether, as there would appear to be a legal liability under the Apportionment Act, no express stipulation that apportionment of the bonus would not be allowed having been made, he will direct that the various amounts of bonus be paid to the claimants without further delay ?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham) : I am afraid that I cannot add anything to the answer which I gave to a precisely similar question put to me by the hon.

Member on May 19 last, to the effect that no copyist can receive bonus in respect of a broken period of less than half a year's copyists' service immediately preceding his appointment to a permanent post, half a year's service being the necessary condition under the Treasury Minute for the payment of such bonus. The Civil Service Commissioners have always been willing, when a copyist has desired it, and the Department in which he was serving has not objected, to defer his permanent appointment as abstractor until he became entitled to another bonus.

POOR RELIEF UNDER FALSE PRETENCES.

MR. ROUNDELL (York, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to a case in which Mrs. Stripling was summoned for obtaining relief from the funds of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union by false pretences, her husband having received over £20 in wages during the period over which relief was granted; and whether, having regard to the censure which was passed by the Magistrate (Mr. Denman) upon the way in which the Poor Law was administered in the Union, the relieving officer having admitted that he neglected to comply with the order requiring him to make inquiry into the antecedents of the applicants for relief, and the medical officer of the Union having certified in the absence of the husband that he was ill, when in fact he was in full work, he has instituted an inquiry into the case of these two officers, and with what result?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The attention of the Local Government Board was called to the case referred to, and they required the medical officer and relieving officer to furnish an explanation of their proceedings. The medical officer was suspended by the Guardians from the performance of his duties, and the Board have declined to remove his suspension, and required his resignation. The relieving officer placed his resignation in the hands of the Guardians on the ground of his age and infirmity.

THRIFT AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN.

MR. ROUNDELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster General what steps have been taken by the Post Office Authorities, by themselves or in concert with the Education Department, to induce parents to appropriate school fees saved under the Assisted Education Act for the encouragement of habits of thrift among their children; whether the Post Office has power, by the payment of commissions or otherwise, to induce school teachers to act as agents for school savings banks, or whether he will seek to obtain such power; if he will state what number of 1s. and of 4s. stamp forms have been issued by the Post Office for the special use of schools in England and Wales since the passing of "The Assisted Education Act, 1891"; and whether any special facilities are offered by the Post Office for the collection of the stamp forms in schools?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): On the passing of the Assisted Education Act, 1891, vigorous steps were at once taken in concert with the Education Department to induce school managers, teachers, scholars, and their parents to make the fullest use of the facilities offered by the Post Office to enable school children to deposit in the Savings Bank the money saved by the discontinuance of school fees. Special forms were provided for the purpose, and circulars were issued giving the fullest information with regard to the system of saving by means of postage stamps affixed to "slips." Since then 680,000 1s. and 270,000 4s. deposit slips have been supplied to managers and teachers. At certain intervals these slips are collected, and either deposited by the manager at the nearest Post Office Savings Bank, or, when necessary, a Post Office clerk attends at the school to collect them. In outlying districts recourse has been had to registered letters, which have been found very useful. The Department has no power to pay commissions to school teachers to act as agents, and it would not be advisable to encourage expenditure in this direction. Managers or teachers cheerfully exert themselves to promote this object in the interests of the children, and if any information is required it is easily obtained by application to the Post Office.

BARKER & CO'S FAILURE.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is proposed to take any further action with reference to the transactions connected with George Barker & Co.?

MR. MUNDELLA: It is not clear from the terms of the question to what particular transactions the hon. Member refers. The Senior Official Receiver in Bankruptcy is making a careful investigation into the administration of the estate of George Barker & Co. by the late trustees. Until that investigation is completed I am not in a position to say what steps will be taken thereon.

THE NOTTINGHAM EXECUTION.

MR. BALLANTINE (Coventry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the circumstances under which Walter Smith made a confession, to whom he made it, and for what reason it was not made known whilst he was alive; and is he aware that Smith asserted his innocence to every one who visited him during his imprisonment, including the Bishop of Nottingham; and that on the night before his execution, being the night after the alleged confession, he saw his mother, brothers, and sister-in-law, and to them reiterated his assurances of innocence?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: As regards the first paragraph of the question, the Secretary of State for the Home Department cannot add anything to the answer he has previously given to an inquiry on this subject. It has been the invariable practice of the Department, and it is in the interests of justice, never to make public the particulars relating to the confessions of any criminal. It is perfectly true that the murderer did make such an assertion as is indicated in the second paragraph in the presence of his relatives.

GRIEVANCES OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if any steps have been taken to remedy the grievance of soldiers, discharged between the 1st of July, 1881, and the 1st of September, 1893, who allege that they have suffered loss of pension by being deprived, through a palpable error, of the old established right of computing their former service towards a pension, under the Royal Warrant in force on the date of their discharge?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley) (who replied) said: This is a complicated case to explain on very short notice. There had been no error, though a relaxation has been made of a somewhat severe Rule. In 1881 the scale of pensions was improved; but from the action of the short service system it was not desired that men should re-enlist. Accordingly, service under a previous enlistment was barred from reckoning towards pension in the case of men enlisted from October 1, 1880, onwards, but the vested interests of those who had previously enlisted were guarded by allowing them to count their former service provided they accepted pensions at the rates current for the period at which they had enlisted. The Warrant of August 14, 1893, relaxed, however, this Rule with ante-date to January 1, 1890. Men who, on re-enlistment, had declared their former service were, under certain conditions, allowed the full benefit of it in reckoning pension; but those who had denied it were refused pension on it, though it was taken into account as part of the time required for making a soldier pensionable at all.

THE WHITE FATHERS OF UGANDA.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will the compensation to the White Fathers in Uganda be borne by the British East Africa Company, or by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I cannot make any further statement about the matter at the present stage of the discussion with the French Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY: How long must we wait for information?

*SIR E. GREY: I cannot answer the question definitely, as the length of these discussions are very uncertain, but I fear it will be some little time.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is the intention of the Government to postpone the date on which the New Code will come into operation till the 1st of May, in order that a discussion may, if necessary, be raised on all debatable matter; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Amendments which he has promised to introduce into the New Code, on such an early day as will give opportunity for full consideration of them before that date? I will also ask the Leader of the House if he is prepared to give effect to the pledge of the Vice President to extend the time during which the Code will remain on the Table of the House?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): The New Education Code will not come into operation, so far as it affects annual grants, until May 1. Whenever an amending Minute is laid before the House, it remains on the Table for a month before it becomes law. The Minute which I alluded to yesterday will be laid on the Table on Tuesday. The hon. Member will have ample time to raise any objection he may wish to make, and, if it is necessary, I have no doubt a longer time can be arranged for.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I am very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman, but how can he give us more time seeing that the Code comes into operation on the 19th of April?

Mr. ACLAND: Nothing comes into force on the 19th of April, which is seriously objected to. We do not propose to act upon that part of the Code which affects the grants until the 1st of May. Any part of the existing Code may be objected to, and I believe, indeed, that the noble Lord the Member for Rochester is going on Monday to object to something which has been contained in the Code for years.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Will there be an opportunity of objecting after the 19th instant?

Mr. ACLAND: Yes.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): Are we to understand that the Minute to be laid on the Table will have the effect of leaving the whole Code open?

Mr. ACLAND: I am restricted from putting it in force until after the Minute has been on the Table a month. The Code is, in fact, comprised of a number of Minutes.

WALTHAM ABBEY EXPLOSION.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when he will be able to publish the Report of the Committee on the recent fatal explosion at Waltham Abbey Factory; and whether the evidence will also be published?

***Mr. WOODALL** (who replied) said: The Committee has not yet reported, but it is understood that it will very shortly do so. The Secretary of State reserves his decision as to publishing the evidence until he has seen it.

Mr. HANBURY: Is it not the fact that there have been two explosions since the Committee began to sit?

***Mr. WOODALL**: There have been two explosions, although I am not quite clear as to the date. The last so-called explosion was merely a noise made by the destruction of some materials.

Colonel LOCKWOOD: Is the hon. Gentleman aware, when he refers so lightly to the last explosion, that it was productive of the greatest possible alarm among the inhabitants of the town?

***Mr. WOODALL**: Yes; I believe it did much surprise some of the people who were near the spot at the time, and especially those who were responsible for firing the material.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UNYORO KING.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information as to the campaign now being carried on in Central Africa by British forces against Kabarega, King of Unyoro?

***Sir E. GREY**: No further information has been received since the statement I made in answer to questions on the 20th of March.

RAILWAY COMPANIES AND THE CARRIERS' ACT.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the great carrying Corporations of Railway and Shipping Companies have adopted and enforced a system of compelling consignors of live stock and other goods to sign and accept conditions by which the Companies contract themselves out of any liability for mortality, damage, or delay, and thereby practically supersede the ordinary law as contained in the Carriers' Act; and whether the Government will take immediate measures to afford the necessary legal protection to stock owners, traders, and agriculturists generally?

*MR. MUNDELLA: I am not aware that the facts are as stated by the hon. Member. The Companies offer two rates —one under which they undertake the ordinary duties of carriers for hire subject to certain conditions, and the other a reduced rate at owners' risk under which the Companies are exempted from all liability not occasioned by the wilful misconduct of their servants. Whether the conditions of the notes are reasonable or not involves legal considerations of great nicety; but the existing law is amply sufficient to deal with such cases, and the persons aggrieved have the remedy in their own hands.

MR. FIELD: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the matter?

MR. MUNDELLA: I shall be glad to inquire into any facts laid before me.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the view of "reasonable conditions" taken by the Law Courts is very different from that held by commercial men?

[No answer was given.]

UGANDA.

MR. WEBB (Waterford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it would be possible to have prepared and distributed to Members before Friday, 20th, a map of Uganda, to illustrate Sir G. Portal's Report and the proposals of Her Majesty's Government?

*SIR E. GREY: A map of Uganda is being prepared for distribution to Members, and the requisite number of copies will be obtained with the least possible delay, but I cannot at present make any definite promise as to the date of issue.

*MR. W. JOHNSTON: Will the hon. Baronet take care to see that on the map the portions of Uganda that were divided between the Protestants and Roman Catholics are marked?

MR. T. M. HEALY: And coloured orange and green?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): If it is not possible to distribute the map to Members before the Debate comes on, will the hon. Gentleman see that a map is set up in the Tea Room?

*SIR E. GREY: I thought that a large map had been already provided; but if that is not so, I shall take care to see that one is put in the Tea Room.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

MR. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the fact that it is now 60 years since the House of Commons first protested against the prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and more than 20 years since the House passed a Bill in favour of such marriages for the seventh time, the Government will, having regard to the uncertainties arising out of the present state of the Law, bring in a Bill dealing with this question?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I should be very glad to see the Bill to which my hon. Friend refers passed into law. I think that most Members on this side of the House and many hon. Gentlemen opposite will also agree with this view. The Bill has been passed by the House of Commons over and over again, and it has been rejected over and over again in another place. I am sorry to say that in the present Session the Government will have no time at their disposal, and I am not sure that the placing of the Bill in the hands of the Government would contribute to its success in another place.

MR. DARLING (Deptford): May I ask whether this Bill, passed by the House of Commons, and rejected over and over again in another place, was not passed in the House of Lords in a form afterwards accepted by the House, receiving the Royal Assent in the time of Lord Lyndhurst?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I should have thought that the hon. and learned Gentleman would have known that the Act of Lord Lyndhurst was not an Act for the purpose of legalising these marriages in the future, but only in the past, and to prevent them from taking place in the future.

LICENSED HOUSES IN GARRISON TOWNS.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state what are the grounds on which the Military Authorities act in placing licensed houses in garrison towns "out of bounds," that is, forbidding the troops to trade with them; whether he can say what reasons are assigned by Colonel Gordon, commanding the Durham Light Infantry, stationed at Buttevant, County Cork, for putting the house of Michael O'Donnel, Richmond Street, out of bounds; and is he aware that this man has always kept his house in a well-conducted manner, that no charge has ever been made against him, and that he has the most excellent recommendations from the Magistrates and clergy of the district; and, if so, whether, in view of the serious loss he now suffers on account of the action of the Military Authorities, an investigation will be made into all the facts connected with his case?

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E): Before the question is answered, I should like to ask if the town in question consists of one street about half-a-mile long, and if there are 34 public-houses in it; whether four of these houses were declared out of bounds for being badly conducted, and for allowing soldiers to get drunk and disorderly on the premises, and whether the best results have not followed since these drinking-shops were put out of bounds; also whether it is not desirable, in the interests of discipline, that the officer commanding in the district should have discretionary power in this matter?

MR. WOODALL (who replied) said: I regret I am not familiar with the local circumstances referred to by the hon. Member. In answer to the question on the Paper, I have to say that it is within the discretion of the Commanding Officer to put any house out of bounds if he considers the fact of its being a resort of the soldiers is prejudicial to discipline. That is a detail of military discipline which it would be most inconvenient to take out of the hands of the Local Military Authority. I may say, however, that, as the result of inquiries, the Commander-in-Chief is satisfied that Colonel Gordon had good grounds for the action he has taken.

RICHMOND LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, with reference to his answer yesterday in relation to the Richmond District Lunatic Asylum, whether the Irish Privy Council have come to any determination involving any extra taxation on the Counties of Louth and Wicklow, and will he be good enough to say whether the Government would be inclined to consider it desirable to give these counties further representation on the District Lunatic Asylums Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: I received a communication from my hon. and learned Friend last night, to the effect that the Privy Council had decided that the proportion of representation should be fixed in reference to the maximum number of patients from each of these five contributory counties. I will certainly inquire into the subject further. It has already engaged my attention both with regard to Louth and Wicklow, and I will inquire further.

MOTION.

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

MAJOR RASCH, Member for South East Essex, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, "the neglect of the Government to take measures for the relief of Agricultural Depression during the present Session;" but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen,

MAJOR RASCH said, he had some excuse for moving the Adjournment of the House, because he had a Notice on the Paper for discussion in a fortnight's time, having reference to this subject, and although the Notice was rather low down on the Paper, yet he had observed in this House that the unexpected always happened, therefore there was some chance of that Motion being reached and the question debated. He did not desire to occupy the time of the House at length on this question, there being other Members more competent to deal with that subject than he, and his remarks should be the concentrated essence of agricultural depression. He thought, perhaps, he had some right to address the House on this subject because he represented a large stretch of country in the south-eastern corner of Essex, reaching from the Erith Marshes to the North Sea, where agricultural depression was prominent and in the most extraordinary manner pronounced. Hon. Members who had had the advantage of seeing the Report of Mr. Pringle, the gentleman who investigated this part of the country for the Agricultural Commission, would know that nearly a third of that wide stretch of country had practically gone out of tillage, which meant that it was going under rough grass, and those who knew anything of the subject, and particularly of agriculture in the Eastern Counties, must be aware that grass was practically useless. Grass would not carry sheep or cattle, and therefore going into rough grass meant going into prairie and entirely out of cultivation. The reason of that in Essex was not far to seek. In the French War—100 years ago—the bush lands and common lands of Essex were ploughed up to grow wheat which was worth 90s. a quarter, and when it was worth only 24s. a quarter it did not pay to cultivate it. They had, consequently, in South East Essex villages which were becoming depopulated, and land which used to be worth £40 per acre people were glad enough to get £5 for, whilst some land sold the other day for £3. Last year the agricultural depression was very pronounced in that district, stock absolutely dying of starvation because there was nothing on the ground on which to feed them, the men who owned the land having no money to buy anything so as to cultivate it. The County of Essex, to paraphrase the language of the Secretary for Scotland in making his proposal for a Scotch Grand Committee, was only a microcrosm of the condition of the whole of agricultural England. Last year something like 172,000 acres went out of cereal cultivation, and although a certain amount of grass was brought under cultivation, yet the total head of live stock was diminished. In his part of the country they did not blame the Government for the bad seasons and the bad times. And it was rather extraordinary they did not, for in 1879, when they had about as bad a year as last, they were told in almost every chapel and at almost every Liberal meeting that Providence had visited them with bad seasons on account of the perversity of the country in supporting an immoral Tory Government. But that was not at all the line that was taken by agriculturists at the present crisis. They did not blame the President of the Board of Agriculture for their condition. The right hon. Gentleman was speeding the plough according to his lights, and they were obliged to him for what he had done for them; though there had been a temporary aberration of what he would call the right hon. Gentleman's bright common sense when the deputation recently waited on him to ask for an order for the compulsory slaughter of cattle at the ports of debarkation. But the agricultural Members had not been able to get anything out of the present Government. Last Session he asked for a day to discuss the agricultural depression, and of course the Prime Minister refused, though he hept the House for 10 weeks on the Home Rule Bill, for which no labourer, farmer, or landlord in Essex cared one brass farthing. The Government would not help the agriculturists and would not allow them to do anything for themselves. They did not expect impossibilities. They did not expect that the Government would put back the clock, reverse the precession of the equinoxes, or put a 40s. duty on wheat. If that were done it would be magnificent from one point or view, but it was not business, and the Government would not do it. Protection was out of the question, because the agricultural labourer knew that his condition under Protection was worse than it was now. If they told the agricultural labourer that though bread might be dearer under Protection his wages would go up also, he would reply, "That's all very well; but my father can remember that under Protection we paid 7d. for bread and we only got 9s. a week in wages." It was, therefore, absolutely hopeless to do anything in the way of putting a duty on wheat. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite had suggested remedies which to him, as a practical man, seemed absolutely futile and utterly useless. Some time ago the Chief Secretary for Ireland visited Essex, and at a great agricultural meeting declared that, if the Essex farmers and labourers would only vote Home Rule, their valleys would smile with golden corn. There were not many valleys in Essex, and, though some people had taken the Chief Secretary's advice and voted Home Rule, there had not been much to smile about yet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last Session stated that, with respect to the agricultural depression, he hoped great things from the Parish Councils Bill. The hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division, who was a practical farmer, was convinced that if a shilling was called eighteenpence under bimetallism the depression would vanish. The hon. Member for the Harborough Division thought that the hope of agriculture lay in the widening of the Agricultural Holdings Act. There was something in that last suggestion, but all the others were absolutely futile. The Minister for Agriculture said that the agricultural Members were never agreed among themselves; that each wanted something different. That was not consonant with the facts. They knew what they wanted; and, though they might not get it from the present Government, there was a probability of getting it from some other Government. What they wanted was a sweeping reform of local taxation. Recent statistics showed that the farmer in some places paid 36 per cent. in rates and taxes, while his neighbour in the village only paid 7 per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would say that they got grants in aid of local taxation; but what was the use of putting a shilling into one pocket and taking eighteenpence out of the other? for that was what grants in aid came to. Local taxation now amounted to something like 6s. in the £1 for agriculturists all over the country. The tithe question was also of great importance with respect to the land. In Essex the tithe amounted to nearly 6s. an acre. Why should there not be a grant from the Treasury—following the analogy of Ireland—to buy up the tithe, 2½ per cent. being charged for the loan, which could be paid off in 40 years, and the tithe abolished without anyone being the worse? Of course, the present Government would not take this step, because it would remove some of the disabilities of the Church and make it more popular. Then there was the question of improved communication with the agricultural districts. On this subject there was an extremely able article in *The Times* of March 31, the writer pointing out that in some districts farmers were practically more remote from their markets than the Canadian farmers from Liverpool. If the farmers happened to be on the Great Eastern Railway they were more remote still. Why should not money be lent by the State at a low rate of interest to lay down light lines? There was nothing extraordinary in such a suggestion, for it had been carried out in Ireland. A light railway cost about £5,000 a mile to build, and a steam tramway, which would do precisely as well, about £2,000 a mile. As to the enlargement of the Agricultural Holdings Act, Parliament might safely abolish the Law of Distress. The present result of depression was that the land was going out of cultivation, the labourers were leaving the country districts, and the villages were becoming deserted. The towns were flooded and the labour market swamped; wages were driven down, and the physique of the population was lowered. He thanked the House in the name of agriculture and of the County of Essex for having permitted him to move this adjournment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Major Rasch.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): As regards the speech which the hon. Member has just made we have no right to complain, for it was moderate in tone and temperate in language; but I must enter my protest against this procedure in the matter of adjournment. If Motions for Adjournment are to be employed in this way there is an end to all arrangement of business. If an Adjournment may be moved on this question it may be moved on 20 others. The House decided the other day that this time should be at the disposal of the Government, and complaints were hurled at us that we did not lay our measures before Parliament. To-day we were going to lay one of our measures before the House; and a Motion is interposed which prevents the transaction of the business which the House had a right to expect, and to which the country is looking forward with considerable interest. Action of this kind dislocates the whole business of Parliament, and in the interest of the House of Commons I enter my protest against it. Turning to what the hon. Member has said, what is the point of his Motion? It is censure of the Government for their neglect in not dealing with the agricultural depression in the present Session, which has not lasted more than a month. The present Session has not lasted a month, and the complaint is that during that time none of the remedies which have been indicated by the hon. Gentleman have been submitted by the Government. How could the Government have dealt with the matter in that time? With the business we have had to transact during that period what time have the Government had for dealing with the questions to which the hon. Member has referred? The hon. Member says the agricultural interest has been suffering from very great depression. We all know and deplore that; but is the agricultural interest the only interest which has suffered from depression? Has it been the custom when other trades—the cotton trade, the iron trade, the coal trade—have been depressed to call upon the Government to give them assistance, and to censure the Government if they did not give them assistance in meal or in malt? As far as I have observed, it is only in the case of the agricultural interest and the agricultural industry that this demand seems to be considered reasonable and, in fact, imperative. I ask Members to consider what would be the consequence if you establish the principle that every industry in this country which happens to suffer from temporary or prolonged depression is to claim to be indemnified out of the Public Purse and out of the general taxation? That is the principle which underlies the Motion of the hon. Member. What is his case with regard to agricultural distress? He looks back with a longing, lingering eye to the time when wheat was 90s. a quarter. He might have put it at 20s. higher than that. In the good old times to which he referred wheat went up to 110s. and even 120s. a quarter, and then, as he justly observed, labourers' wages were 6s. a week. Since those days, owing to the increase in the facilities of communication, the wheat production of the rest of the world has happily reduced the price of bread; and that is the first cause of the depression the hon. Member has stated. He has said that this country now requires 28,000,000 quarters of wheat, and that of that quantity a very small proportion is produced in this country, and the greater part comes from abroad. Does he wish that the foreign supply should be diminished? He desires that the home production shall be increased—but how? By an increase in price. That is what he and his friends desire—an increase in price. There are two methods of bringing about an increase of price—one is protection, by excluding foreign corn; and the other is bimetallism, which deals with money. I am glad the hon. Member has repudiated the latter remedy as being absurd, in which I entirely concur with him. He regarded protection and bimetallism as equally unobtainable; and he bracketed Parish Councils with them as useless for affording any relief. I believe that Parish Councils will have a sensible effect on that migration of which he spoke—of the agricultural population from the villages to the towns; I believe, and the Liberal Party generally are of opinion, that the interest which will be given to the labourers in their own locality—and I hope in the land of that locality—will to a great degree remedy that migration which we all so much regret. The hon. Member says that the Government ought to have done something in the course of the last month; but he recognises that it is idle to think of returning to protection, however desirable it may be that the price of wheat should be raised, so as to enable more corn to be grown in Essex. He says that the possibility of growing wheat in that county is only to be maintained by a price of something like 90s. a quarter.

Let us look at the effect of protection in foreign countries. Look at France. From year to year it has been increasing protection; and yet are the agriculturists satisfied? They get, I believe, now the equivalent of something like 15s. a quarter upon wheat, and the complaints of agricultural depression are just as loud and persistent in France as they are in this country. I have heard the right hon. Member for Sleaford say in this House, or have read of his saying elsewhere, that the experience of France, and the failure of Protective Duties to establish agricultural prosperity in France was one of the facts which had convinced him that protection was not a remedy to be looked to by ourselves. You find in highly-protected countries that, although the price of corn is higher, the depression of the agricultural interest is as persistent as it is elsewhere. Again, anyone who has followed the recent action of the agrarian party in Germany must know perfectly well that in Germany complaints of agricultural depression are as great as or greater than they are in this country. The hon. Member, having dismissed protection and bimetallism, and having a low opinion of Parish Councils, has not suggested what the Government ought to have done, except that we ought to remodel the whole system of local taxation. Well, the late Government tried their hands at that. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer made what he told us was a full and final settlement of the whole question of local taxation by making very large grants to it and charging an additional £4,000,000 of it upon the general taxpayer. I should have hoped that that would have had more effect in diminishing local rates than it apparently has had; but, like most subsidies of that description, somehow the money runs to waste like water on the sand. I know from my own personal observation that the rates are very little lower than they were before; but they are very much lower than they were in the good old days of which the hon. Member spoke. In many cases they are not one-third, and in most cases they are not one-half, of what they were in the times when some estates were acquired by their present holders. Therefore, it is not true to say that the burden of rates upon the land is greater than it was previously; certainly the rating of agricultural land is lighter than it was. It is a common fallacy to mix up all kinds of rates—urban rates, which represent gas and water and all kinds of things; but if you look at the purely agricultural rate, it has greatly decreased in modern times. Of that there cannot be the smallest doubt. The hon. Member speaks of tithes, repeating the usual fallacy that they are a tax upon land. But they are nothing of the kind. Everybody who has bought land has paid a less price for it in consequence of its being chargeable with tithe. Therefore, to give it to the landowner would be to make him a present of something he is not entitled to. It is the same with the Land Tax, which is a fixed charge in some counties of 4s. and in others of 6d. or less, and the man who buys land gives less for it where the Land Tax is higher than where it is lower. It is the same in regard to the old rate—what the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, called the "heredity rate"—the rate subject to which land had often changed hands. There is the greatest fallacy in dealing with these things as you deal with modern and increasing rates. What more had the hon. Member suggested? With all his knowledge, intelligence, and ingenuity, he says that we should deal with the Law of Distress. I am very willing. It is a proposal which, coming from him, might fairly be accepted. If that is one of the remedies which he proposes for agricultural distress, I confess that for my part I am willing to consider it. Then he has spoken of light railways, such as have been carried out in Ireland, and says that County Councils might make light railways and tramways. I shall be glad to see and examine proposals with that object in view, if County Councils are willing to take the responsibility; and I suppose the hon. Member must have some knowledge on that subject, or he would not have made the suggestion. If the County Councils are willing to borrow money upon the security of the rates and at a reasonable rate of interest for making light railways and tramways like any other works, under the Public Loans Act, I shall be extremely glad to examine any such proposal and see whether it is practicable and workable. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman will understand that I approach the suggestion in no hostile spirit at all. But I do not feel justified in occupying more of the time of the House, and it is merely out of courtesy to the hon. Member and out of sympathy with the distress from which the agricultural industry is suffering that I have entered at so much length into this subject. I do not think that in fairness it can be said we have been remiss in the matter. Hon. Members know how we are situated in regard to time, and therefore I hope they will not think we approach or meet the subject in any unsympathetic spirit. We are bound to state the things which we cannot do and which we ought not to do in the general interest of the community. But we have shown that, if any practical suggestions are capable of being made, we are very willing to examine and forward them if we can. [Commander BETHELL: Cattle.] As to the exclusion of foreign cattle, I accept the principle that when there is a danger of infection the English farmer and the English people are entitled to protection from that. Nothing can be more foolish than to expose the flocks and herds of this country to danger from foreign infection; but where there is no danger, where there is no reasonable ground for asserting there is danger, I am bound to say the consuming classes of the country ought to be able to get their meat from any quarter which is available to them and to get it at as cheap a price as they can. These are the leading principles by which we wish to be governed. However depressed the agricultural interest may be, I am sure hon. Gentlemen in all parts of the House will feel that when we are called upon to make money grants, whether in the form of substitution of rates or in any other form, we must remember we are dealing with the money of the taxpayers. We must remember that we should be imposing burdens for the benefit of one interest upon all other interests; and that if we once begin to do that in respect of one particular interest, we should begin a system which, I am sure, hon. Gentlemen opposite would not wish to see extended generally — a system of State-aided industry, because that is really what the demand is. It is a demand which, if admitted in the case of agriculture, must be admitted in the cases of trade and manufacture, in the case of the iron man, the coal man, the cotton man, and the woollen man, all of whom will say, "We are the subjects of undeserved misfortune and temporary depression." I can remember well what was the state of the cotton industry in Lancashire at the time of the Civil War in America. But there was no demand then made for State aid. The Lancashire people bore most terrible privations with a courage which will always be remembered to their honour. No doubt they received much private assistance from individuals; but in that case the principle was not established that a distressed industry, on account of its temporary misfortune, was entitled to draw upon the resources of the general taxpayers of the country. Though I know it is very hard for men who are suffering to be told how little can be done for them, I would strongly recommend hon. Gentlemen to remember the danger of principles such as have been advocated. I hope that in the observations I have made I shall not be considered to have spoken unsympathetically of the great landed interest of the country.

MR. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, he was sure everybody would feel that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, in the reply he had made to his hon. and gallant Friend, had endeavoured to address himself to the question in a spirit of sympathy, at which they were all gratified. But, at the same time, he was bound to say that the agricultural interest was suffering much more seriously than any other industry which had been mentioned. ["No!"] An hon. Member cried "No," but he affirmed that the agricultural interest was confronted with greater difficulties than any other industry in the country. If that were the case, he was afraid that words of sympathy, however kindly and courteously spoken, would prove but a small measure of support to men who thought they were entitled to something more at the hands of the House and of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman said he felt bound to protest against the method adopted to bring the question under the notice of the House. Hon. Gentlemen opposite were loud in their protests now when his hon. and gallant Friend took the only opportunity possible—in a Session in which the Government had taken the whole time of the House earlier than ever before, in a Session in which the Government had made no mention of agricultural depression—of bringing the subject forward, but they were dumb when they sat in Opposition and similar Motions were made, times out of number, about matters which nobody could honestly and fairly describe as being at all equal in their importance or magnitude to the subject of agricultural depression. The time was when agriculture was described as the backbone of the country, but now its very mention was frequently received with sneers and jeers by hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that if such a course as the present were persevered in public business would be rendered impossible. Why? Because the right hon. Gentleman told them if this Motion could be made 50 other Motions of a similar character could be made. Did he want them to understand there were 50 other questions of similar importance? The conditions under which agriculturists were called upon to carry on their industry were totally different to those which used to exist. They could not, for instance, make use of improved machinery in the same degree as other traders could. A question of the greatest difficulty which ought to receive the attention of the Government, a difficulty which it was possible to deal with, was that it was no longer a question of landowners who could not properly manage their property being called upon to submit to the unpleasant ordeal of seeing their property pass into other hands, but of men being compelled to own, and in many cases to occupy, property which they had not the capital to work, and of which it was absolutely impossible to relieve themselves. When hon. Gentlemen opposite were in Opposition they were never tired of telling men they ought to be the owners of the soil they cultivated. The late Minister for Agriculture brought in a Bill to facilitate the acquisition of land by labourers and others, and the Mover of the present Motion had suggested—which suggestion the right hon. Gentleman had, he thought, entirely misapprehended—that they should apply to this country the principle applied to Ireland, and with public money relieve local districts by making local railways and tramways.

Sir W. HARCOURT: He said the County Councils.

Mr. W. LONG said, his hon. and gallant Friend had suggested public funds. He was anxious to call the attention of the House to the fallacy which underlay all the suggestions which came from hon. Gentlemen opposite. Parish Councils, it had been said, would be the salvation of the agricultural interest. Parish Councils were to have power to facilitate the creation of allotments. How were those allotments to be provided under the Local Government Act? Land was to be offered to a limited number of people, but others were to be burdened in order that that might be done. Was that going to relieve the agricultural interest? He was personally aware that a large number of small owners were very much alarmed at the proposal. They believed that in all probability their small properties, in which they had invested their savings, would be very heavily burdened so that other people might get the benefit of the Act. He believed there was a possible policy for a Government and a Party in the direction of the acquisition of allotments by labourers. He believed they might lighten the load which was undoubtedly too heavy for the agricultural interest to bear by, in the first place, facilitating the transfer of land from the existing owner to other owners; and, in the second place, providing money which would enable the smaller man on easy and simple terms to obtain money from the State with which to acquire land. If they did that they would create a market for land in districts where there was no market at all. The right hon. Gentleman had reminded the House that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer had done a great deal in the direction of relieving the rates, but that unhappily rates had not fallen. Did the right hon. Gentleman know why rates had not fallen? Since the creation of County Councils there had been a great increase in expenditure upon the improvement of the great roads of the country, and seeing that these roads were used chiefly by the general community and very little by the farmers, it was an injustice that the cost should fall upon the local ratepayers and farmers. The right hon. Gentleman said that local rates could only be relieved by increasing the burdens of the taxpayer. He did not deny that. If the money was to be spent, it must be found from one source or another; but the Government had, in the examples given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, treated the land more unfairly to-day than it had been treated hitherto. The President of the Board of Agriculture had done his best to faithfully represent the agricultural interest, but he had suffered from the great disability, under which Her Majesty's Government ought not to have placed him, of not having a place in the Cabinet; he had, therefore, not been able to advance the cause of agriculture when the Councils of the Government were being held. If the right hon. Gentleman had been in the Cabinet he did not believe that that part of the Local Government Act of last year which altered the system of the imposition of local rates would have been adopted without a strong protest on his part. Whatever might be the hidden blessings of the Parish Councils Act—and they were not yet apparent—there was no question that one result would be, if its powers were largely used, to considerably increase the rates. Was that going to be a relief to agriculture? It was no longer a question of rent in many counties. It was no longer a question of the landlord getting more rent than he ought. They were face to face with the appalling fact that thousands and thousands of acres had gone altogether out of cultivation, land which ought to be available for the food supply of the people, and to say that that state of things could be met by a system of allotments was to talk idle nonsense. The labourers were far too practical to be caught by such chaff as that. They would not allow themselves to be made the instruments of attempting to cultivate land as difficult to cultivate as that was. He could give many instances himself of farms which were formerly let at £1,000 a year, and of £700 or £800 a year, which were now let at £150, £100, and in some cases at £50 a year, the reason being that the occupier complained that the burdens on land were so heavy. He contended that that was not a fair condition of things. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred, at the end of his speech, to the subject of the importation of Canadian cattle. He said it was desirable that the people of this country should have cheap meat, and that therefore the importation of these cattle should not be interfered with where there was no reason to believe that disease existed. But the importation of a single animal from a country whose boundaries were, so to speak, only nominal, might do incalculable mischief and destroy herds in this country. Moreover, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find that there was no justification for his belief that the result of stopping the importation of these cattle would be to raise the price of meat. When his right hon. Friend near him (Mr. Chaplin) was President of the Board of Agriculture their importation was interfered with. The disease in this country was almost stamped out, and not only did the price of meat not rise but it actually fell, although there was less meat brought into the country. Even if the immediate result were slightly to raise the price of meat that was a small evil compared with that of getting herds in this country again infected. The House was asked to discuss all sorts of measures, although there was not the remotest prospect of carrying them into law, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been acting more in conformity with the wishes of all who belonged to the great agricultural industry if he had given one day at least for the discussion of the situation, and if he had indicated that the Government were willing as far as possible to give some relief. But they must be content with the meagre comfort the right hon. Gentleman had given them. He hoped the President of the Board of Agriculture would give some explanation of the position he felt bound to assume when he received a deputation the other day on this particular subject, which attitude caused much disappointment. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take advantage of this opportunity, and would give the House his reasons for taking up that position. The right hon. Gentleman, at all events, ought to thank his hon. and gallant Friend for the course he had taken, as it enabled him as a responsible Minister to explain the course he took. He thoroughly agreed with the course which had been taken by his hon. and gallant Friend.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden) : I do not think it will be necessary for me to detain the House at any great length on the general aspects of the subject, which have been very fully dealt with by the Leader of the House, but I have been challenged by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down on a subject peculiar to my Department, and which has not been referred to at any length. I understand from what the hon. Gentleman has said that some irritation—I will not say irritation, but misapprehension—exists in the minds of right hon. Gentlemen and hon. Gentlemen opposite with regard to a speech I had the honour of making to a deputation which waited upon me the other day. That deputation did not wait upon me with regard to my action in the matter of Canadian cattle. They came to ask that the Government should for the future totally and perpetually order the slaughter of all foreign cattle at the ports. But even if the Government were inclined to, they would be prevented from doing so by the law as it at present stands. The deputation must therefore either have wished me to break the law or to bring in an amending Act. I asked what circumstances had arisen to cause them to press upon the Government such an alteration of the law at this juncture. If there was any prevalence of disease or any fear of the introduction of cattle disease into this country through the importation of live foreign cattle I could quite understand hon. Members on both sides of the House who represent agricultural constituencies coming to me and urging me to adopt the most stringent measures to prevent the introduction of that disease, and, if necessary, to endeavour to alter the existing law on the subject. My right hon. Friend whom I had the honour to succeed in my present Office, when there was a great outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the country —which outbreak he successfully combated—will admit that it might have been said at the time that there was great danger of the spread of the disease. Members might well have come forward then and said, " Why don't you alter the law, giving us a general protection against the introduction of disease by foreign cattle ? " But at the present moment no such condition of things exists. There never was a time in the history of agriculture when our flocks and herds were more free from disease than at the present moment. Putting aside all question of interference with foreign trade and of friction with foreign countries and our colonies, I ask is this a time for an hon. Member to move the Adjournment of the House, thereby for a time stopping the business of the country, in order to urge on us the necessity of taking safeguards which are unnecessary ? I do not think that my action in the past with regard to the prevention of disease has been such as to cause apprehension in the minds of agriculturists that if there is a danger of the introduction of disease from foreign countries or the colonies I shall neglect to put the law into force as I am bound to do. On the other hand, as I am also bound to do by law as it stands, when there is absolutely no fear, or when I am of opinion that there is reasonable security against the danger, of the introduction of disease from foreign countries, I must allow the importation of foreign cattle. The hon. Member who just sat down spoke about the exclusion of foreign cattle not raising the price of meat. In a great degree I agree with him ; but it is not the question of raising the price of meat. It is a question of raising the price of store cattle, and at the present moment, when there seems to be a probability of the price of store cattle rising in the country, it is hardly the time, in the interests of graziers (whatever hon. Gentlemen may think of the interest of breeders), to prevent the importation of foreign cattle. Even in the interest of breeders, if foreign cattle can be safely introduced into the country, there ought to be no law to prevent such introduction. Hon. Gentlemen may rest perfectly satisfied that if at any time there is any doubt as to the safety of foreign importation, I shall give the benefit of the doubt to my own country. I have confined myself to this topic because I do not think I have any right, after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to go into other subjects. I only deal with the subject upon which I was challenged, and I can assure the House that I have as deeply at heart as any hon. Gentleman opposite who represents the agricultural interest the preservation of the sanitary condition of the stock of this country. I can assure hon. Gentlemen that so long as I remain at my present post, whatever restrictions are necessary, will in the future be maintained as they have been in the past.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): When the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer commenced his observations by protesting against lengthened Debates on Motions for Adjournment I must say it did occur to me that in his case practice would have been better than precept. The right hon. Gentleman addressed to us a speech challenging gentlemen on this side of the House on a whole variety of questions in a way which almost necessitates, it seems to me, some considerable debate. Sir, he taunted us on this side of the House, in connection with this question of agricultural depression, with a desire to raise the prices of food. I should like to meet the right hon. Gentleman by asking him this question: Does he desire them to remain as they are at the present time? If he does, what is the value of his professed and pretended sympathy for agriculture—of what avail has been the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the means of alleviating distress? He says there are two modes of raising prices, one by Protection and the other by what he describes as "a flagrant absurdity"—namely, the existence of bimetallism. I have not the slightest intention of saying a word on that subject to-night, but the House must not blame me if, in a few sentences, I endeavour to meet the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman on this point.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It was the Mover of the Motion for the Adjournment who referred to the subject, not me.

MR. CHAPLIN: I did not say the right hon. Gentleman introduced the subject. I say, however, that he made the wholly uncalled-for statement that bimetallism is a flagrant absurdity. I should like to tell the right hon. Gentleman this: that when he and other Members of this House have, as they will have in due course, an opportunity of reading the evidence that is now daily being given before the Royal Commission that they themselves have appointed, they will be absolutely astonished to find how great and rapid has been the growth of opinion on this question, especially amongst the agricultural interest. I am committing no breach of propriety when I say that only this morning we had before us one of the most distinguished representative agriculturists throughout the whole of the United Kingdom; and if I understood his evidence aright, the drift of it was that the only effectual and real remedy for agricultural depression that he could look forward to in future was the re-adoption of the very system which the right hon. Gentleman opposite without, I believe, ever having given it anything like adequate attention, describes as a "flagrant absurdity." The right hon. Gentleman referred to the question of Protection in France and Germany, and he quoted some speeches of mine to the effect that, notwithstanding the existence of Protection in these countries, depression is as great or greater there than it is here. That is true. I have come to that opinion. But it has taught me to do something which it has not yet taught the right hon. Gentleman, I think; and that is, to ascertain with great diligence and by every means within my power to try to discover whether there is not and must not be some other and some great common cause for that unparalleled fall in the price of produce of all sorts and kinds and descriptions, which everyone who has studied the question of the agricultural depression knows lies at the very root of the whole question. Sir, the opinions which, I am not ashamed to say, I have frequently avowed and do hold on this question, which the right hon. Gentleman says is so flagrant an absurdity, are shared by men of ten thousand times greater ability than myself, not only in this but in every other country in the world, and their number is being largely augmented day by day. What is happening in Germany at this moment?—and here I would remind the right hon. Gentleman of what he has said in some of his taunting replies on this subject. "Germany," he used to say, "will have nothing to do with so ridiculous a proposal." I always told him that I believed he was absolutely mistaken. Who is proved to be right to-day? Why, at this very moment, in consequence of urgent pressure by the

Agricultural Party in Germany, a Royal Commission has been appointed to see whether bimetallism can be adopted by Germany itself, and if it cannot be adopted by itself whether there should be an International arrangement. So I venture to think the right hon. Gentleman's taunts on this subject are somewhat out of place to-day. It is very easy indeed to say that anything is an absurdity, but it is a very difficult thing to prove it. Whenever this question has arisen the right hon. Gentleman has shirked it. He has never once attempted to tackle the question, or prove his assertion that bimetallism is absurd; and I think the time is not far distant when the right hon. Gentleman will be compelled to face it. When that time comes I think he will find it more difficult than he anticipated to attach the charge of supporting "a flagrant absurdity" to a number of eminent men throughout the country. It may be said, in defence of the attitude of the Government, that they have appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the agricultural situation at the present moment. That may be an excuse for their inaction. I cannot say that the right hon. Gentleman appears to attach much importance to his own Commission. He appeared to me to have forgotten its existence. He never even mentioned it or alluded to it in the most distant manner. I refer to it, however, because I want to remind the right hon. Gentleman that there are many questions on which, quite apart from the nomination of that Commission, the Agricultural Party throughout the country are already entirely agreed; but whenever we mention one of these subjects the right hon. Gentleman invariably meets us with a flat refusal. There is the question of relief from the rates. I need not remind the House of the attitude he adopted on this question last Session. He absolutely declined to have anything whatever to do with it or entertain the proposal for a moment. There is another subject on which he will not pledge himself, although the farmers are unanimous with regard to it, and that is that all foreign meat coming into the country shall be marked. A question was put to the right hon. Gentleman shortly after the Session commenced, and he refused absolutely to have anything to do with the matter. And so it is with all the matters that have been laid before the Government by the Representatives of the agricultural interest—it does not much matter whether by friends on his own side or by Agricultural Representatives on this side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman and the Government invariably decline to take any action on any subject, be it great or small, which would be satisfactory to the Representatives of that industry at the present moment. Now, Sir, I come for a few moments to the question last raised by my hon. Friend, and to which the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Agriculture has replied, and that is the question of the restrictions upon Canadian cattle which are in existence at the present time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer laid down a doctrine on this point which I suppose nobody would question. "Where there is danger," he says, "exclude them; where there is no danger, admit them." No one would contest that; but the question is, is there danger at the present time or is there not? and that is a subject on which a great many Representatives of the agricultural interest are extremely uneasy. What we are anxious about is to know explicitly what are the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture with regard to maintaining the present restrictions on the importation of Canadian cattle into the interior of this country. We think we have some good reason for feeling anxiety on this point after reading reports of the two deputations which waited on the right hon. Gentleman. Some days ago he received a deputation representing the Central Chamber of Agriculture and some 50 other Agricultural Associations from all parts of the country, urgently pressing on him to maintain the existing restrictions.

Mr. H. GARDNER: I think the right hon. Gentleman is under some misapprehension. The deputation was not to urge the continuance of restrictions, but the total and perpetual prohibition, except for slaughter, of the importation of cattle altogether.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I cannot imagine a more effectual mode of maintaining the existing restrictions. The importation of cattle from America cannot be otherwise than dangerous probably for many years to come. The right hon. Gentleman has replied to my right hon. Friend that if a country is free from disease we must admit cattle from it, and his replies—as I stated just now—have given great anxiety to many Representatives of the agricultural interest. What we want to know—and I think it is a subject on which we have a right to ask for information, considering the tenour of the right hon. Gentleman's speech to one deputation—is whether he considers the time has arrived when restrictions on the importation of Canadian cattle may be safely removed or not? If they cannot be imported with safety, and if the right hon. Gentleman is willing or able to give to the House an assurance that these restrictions will not be removed during the present season, then I should see no necessity whatever for pressing the right hon. Gentleman further on this point or for prolonging my observations.

MR. H. GARDNER: I am going to give an answer to that question in the course of next week.

MR. CHAPLIN: I want an answer now.

MR. H. GARDNER: I am obliged, first, to put myself into communication with the Colonial Office and with Canada on the subject.

MR. CHAPLIN: Surely the Minister for Agriculture may take the agricultural public of England into his confidence, and tell them whether he thinks it desirable or not for the safety of their interests that certain restrictions should be maintained without asking permission from the Colonies or a foreign country before he makes that announcement. The answers of the right hon. Gentleman rather add to the anxiety which I own I have felt of late. In order to appreciate the merits of this question the first thing to bear in mind is the nature of the disease of pleuro-pneumonia. There are two great peculiarities which attach to the disease. One is that it cannot be detected in the animal at all by the cleverest experts in the world so long as the animal is alive, and the other is the immense period during which the disease may lie dormant. Sir, I notice from the Papers which have been laid on the Table that even the Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, writing on behalf of the right hon. Gentleman, informed the Canadian Government that that period is sometimes as long as 15 months. Here are his words—

> "There is abundant evidence that contagious pleuro-pneumonia may remain dormant during a lengthened period, and it was stated in evidence given to the Departmental Committee in 1888 that cases had been known of the development of the disease after a no less period than 15 months."

Well, that being so, I must ask the House to recollect what has happened quite recently in connection with this subject. I would go back to the Autumn of 1892, and then to a period much longer. In the Autumn of 1892, after Scotland had been absolutely free from this disease for some time, it was re-imported by cargoes of Canadian cattle, which were proved not only to be suffering from contagious pleuro-pneumonia, but to have contracted the disease at a period before they came into this country. What was the result of the outbreak? It spread to 79 different centres in Scotland, or rather the animals were conveyed to 79 different centres, and I think that something like 1,200 or 1,300 animals were ordered to be slaughtered, and the compensation given in consequence of this slaughter was £13,000. That is serious in itself; but what is infinitely more serious is this—the enormous risk that is run of disease being spread all over the country. There has been a great deal of correspondence on the subject, and the right hon. Gentleman himself stated in one of the Debates last Session there were no less than four different cases found of animals actually diseased, and that the disease had spread so far that Scotch animals were found to have contracted it. The mischief was discovered and was stopped before it had gone farther. Coming to a later period, the right hon. Gentleman, to meet the views of the Colonies, undertook to make a systematic examination of the lungs of animals brought from Canada for a considerable period and slaughtered at the port, and then to consider, when he saw the results of the examination, what course he ought to pursue. That was carried out, and we have the result on page 77 of the Report issued by the Board of Agriculture. We find that in May and June, 1893, there was one case discovered on a ship called the *Brazilian*, and two sets of lungs were received from a ship called the *Lake Winnipeg*. In the first case the appearances were identical with pleuro-pneumonia, and in the second, in one instance, there were well-defined indications of bronchial pneumonia in addition to pleuro-pneumonia, whilst in the other typical signs of pleuro-pneumonia were apparent. So that it seemed that so short a time ago as last year the disease undoubtedly existed in Canada. Last Session, in the month of August, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "We are agreed that there is disease in Canada. The Canadians say it is not contagious pleuro-pneumonia :—we say it is."

I have verified the right hon. Gentleman's words this morning. I am sorry I have not the volume of *Hansard* with me, but I am certain on the point. Well, what does that mean ? It means that eight months ago, on the showing of the right hon. Gentleman himself, contagious pleuro-pneumonia was in existence in Canada, and we have, at the same time, the authority of the Board of Agriculture itself for stating that this disease is often known to be in incubation for 15 months before it is discovered. I have not the slightest doubt in the world that there is plenty of pleuro-pneumonia among the animals in Canada at the present time. I may be told that we receive constant assurances from the Canadian Government to the contrary. So we do. I very often received them, and the right hon. Gentleman received them before this systematic examination was made ; and if I had *Hansard* here I could point to another passage where the right hon. Gentleman says—

> "We received assurances from the Canadian Government that the country was practically free, and we took steps to ascertain how far that was correct ; and, after a systematic examination, we found ourselves in the presence of this contagious disease again which we had been so often assured did not exist."

I do hope I have submitted to the House some reasons to justify me in the alarm I feel at the replies which have been given by the right hon. Gentleman to questions which we have ventured to put to him. Sir, I have only one thing more to say on the subject. I wish to ask the House to consider why we are to take this course—if we are to take it—of removing the restrictions upon the importation of foreign cattle ? What are the arguments in favour of it ? To whose interest would it be ? Is it in the interest of the consumer ? Certainly not ; the very opposite is the case. If the meat does not come alive, it must come dead ; and if it comes dead, or if the animals are slaughtered at the port of landing, the price is always cheaper than if the living animals are admitted into the country. Meat will not keep for ever ; it must be sold within a given time ; therefore, it is to the interest of the consumer that these restrictions should be maintained. Is it to the interest of the producer here ? Of course, that could not be contended for a moment. It is very greatly to his disadvantage, and the only people who would gain would be the foreign and Canadian exporters, and a very limited number of graziers and farmers in something like four or five counties in Scotland, and a still more limited number in one or two of the Eastern Counties of this country. With these exceptions, I will undertake to say that 9 out of 10, or 99 out of every 100, of the agricultural community are in favour of maintaining these restrictions. There is another reason, which it seems to me ought to turn the scale in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman in favour of continuing the restrictions. To remove them would involve an enormous injury on the owners and breeders of stock as a general rule, and, above all, on the Irish farmers. If you are to admit store cattle from Canada, it seems to me impossible that you can continue permanently to exclude them from the United States of America ; and if once they are admitted from the United States of America, I have only to express to the House what the result in my humble opinion, in the interests of agriculturists of the United Kingdom, would be. I believe it would result in the immediate depreciation of the capital value of their live stock by 20 or 25 per cent. I cannot conceive what that would mean to the agricultural population, especially at a time like the present. Everybody knows what the chief capital of the farmers of this country consists of. It consists, of course, of the money they have embarked in live stock, and I believe if such a course as this were adopted it would be the only one thing wanted to complete the absolute ruin and destruction of the farming class. I advocate as earnestly as I can the continuance of the restrictions. I maintain that these restrictions are absolutely necessary to ensure us against the re-introduction of this disease. The House will remember that much has been done in recent years to ensure the flocks and herds of this country against disease, and that policy has found favour in the House of Commons. I believe it has been justified to the full by experience and by its fruits, and I earnestly hope the House of Commons will resist by every means in its power anything which is even a first step towards the reversal of that policy.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

MR. SPEAKER: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has claimed that the question be now put. In assenting to that Motion I think it is my duty to make some remarks in regard to the fact that the Motion for the Adjournment of the House has received such a large measure of support in this House. I do not think that under the Standing Order of 1882 a Motion on a subject of this kind, having such a very wide scope, was ever contemplated. What I think was contemplated was an occurrence of some sudden emergency, either in home or foreign affairs. But I do not think it was contemplated—if the House will allow me to state my view—that a question of very wide scope which would demand legislation to deal with it in any effective manner should be the subject of discussion on a Motion for the Adjournment of the House, because if that was so we might have repeated Motions made by the Opposition of the day, not so much in the direction of censuring the Government for action which had been taken or not taken for bringing to notice some grievance demanding instant remedy, as in the direction of wishing to introduce legislation on some particular subject. That is not the purpose of the Standing Order of 1882, and would, I think, cut at the root of the Order. I thought it necessary to make this statement out of respect to a Motion which has obtained so much support of the House. I assent to the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I now put the Question, "That the Question be now put."

Motion agreed to.

Question put accordingly, "That this House do now adjourn."

The House divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 208.—(Division List, No. 24.)

Mr. Chaplin

PERIOD OF QUALIFICATION AND ELECTIONS BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) rose to ask leave to introduce a Bill to reduce the Period of Qualification for Parliamentary and Local Government Electors, and to provide for the half-yearly registration of such electors, and to provide for taking the polls at a Parliamentary General Election on one day, and to restrict plural voting at Parliamentary Elections, and for purposes consequential thereon. The right hon. Gentleman said: The Bill which I now ask the leave of the House to introduce is one containing proposals to which the Government attach the greatest importance; but although these proposals are highly important, they are, I think the House will find, so simple and so direct that I shall be able to combine a tolerably clear explanation of its provisions with brevity and concision. Mr. Speaker, this is an occasion on which I might, perhaps, ask the House to return to the older and better custom of Parliament, by which it was usual to give leave to introduce a Bill of this kind, when introduced by the Government of the day, without any preliminary statement at all. But that custom has—as, I hope, only for the time—been placed in abeyance; and, therefore, I will now give a short description of what this Bill will do and how it is done. The House will naturally compare the proposals I now make with those which the Government offered last year in the Bill introduced by my right hon. Friend who is now the Secretary of State for India. The two Bills are different in many respects, and if the House wants to know why we have proposed a different Bill this year from that which we proposed last year, my answer is twofold. In the first place, Parliamentary time has not become any more abundant in the interval which has elapsed, nor has the prospect of abundant time become brighter. We have, therefore, framed this Bill with a view to place propositions before the House which need not involve any very prolonged or elaborate discussion. In the second place, we have changed the Bill because in the interval Parliament has dealt to some extent with the machinery of Parliamentary registration. Last year my right hon. Friend proposed that the machinery of registration should be performed by officials appointed for that special purpose. That proposal no longer appears in this Bill. It is well-known that there was such a difference of opinion on both sides of the House as to who should be the Superintendent Registrar, and what body should have the power of appointing him, that there seemed very little prospect last year of that proposal receiving the assent of the House. But, since then, the Local Government Bill of my right hon. Friend has been passed; and by one of the provisions of that measure the Overseers are now made directly responsible to the Parish Councils, instead of continuing in a position of responsibility only to non-elective Justices. That is one important provision which we hoped might have found favour with the House, but which we have not thought proper to bring before the House now. Our aim has been, in framing this Bill, to achieve simplicity and directness. We are not going to attempt anything like the satisfaction of speculative Constitutional symmetry. We are making an attempt to remove certain admitted practical blots. We begin by turning into a reality the intention of Parliament that every inhabitant householder in town and country should have his vote; and we do what we can to take this step—that the voice of a constituency, instead of being adulterated and nullified by out-voters, shall be effectively heard. Of course, there are many familiar topics of electoral reform which we have been compelled by our design of simplicity to pass over. For example, there is the question of the returning officer's expenses. That has been before the House for the last 20 years. I remember long before I was in this House Mr. Fawcett brought that subject forward with the approval of the Party sitting on this side of the House. We believe that the dangers connected with that proposal would be avoided either by a second ballot or by other arrangements. I may, perhaps, be permitted to say that I gave notice some years ago of a Bill for such a second ballot. I believe that circumstances are every day in the minds of both Parties pointing more and more clearly in that direction. But such a scheme would require very complex arrangements. Another of the omitted topics is the topic of the lodger vote. It is not entirely omitted, but its larger necessities of reform, such as, for example, the abolition or the reduction of the value qualification, we do not attempt to touch in this Bill, because a proposition of that kind would go rather deep into franchise. Though it is very hard to know always where franchise ends and registration begins, still we think that subject would not come within the scope of the present Bill. The first proposition which the Bill contains is one which was in the Bill of last year, and which reduces the residential period of qualification. It is not at all necessary for me to reproduce my right hon. Friend's arguments in favour of that reduction. It was then made clear that it may happen, under the present conditions of the residential qualification, that the householder may occupy his house for nearly two years, and only at the end of that time find himself on the Register. In the course of the discussion of last year it was admitted in every section of the House that that is a scandal which ought not to be allowed to continue. It was suggested last year that the qualifying period should be six months and not three. We proposed three months last year, and we shall do our best to insist upon it now. I should like to point out one argument in favour of that reduction which I will state to the House. It is an argument drawn from figures given in the Return circulated to-day by the Local Government Board. It appears that in 1891 the number of inhabited houses in England and Wales was 5,500,000, of which there are about 3,000,000 in county divisions. The occupiers on the Parliamentary Register are 4,225,000. Therefore, 1,275,000 occupiers of inhabited houses are not on the Register. Of course, the House will at once perceive that among the inhabitant householders are women. But we have a means of roughly arriving at the number of female inhabitant householders. In 1890 a Return was issued of the number of women entitled to vote for the County or Town Councils, and that number was put somewhere between 600,000 and 700,000, so that from the 1,275,000 inhabitant householders who are not on the Register we have to deduct 600,000 or 700,000 as being women; and then we have 600,000 or 700,000 left as the number of inhabited houses in excess of the male occupant voters. The case may be made considerably stronger; and it can be shown that this statement is, I believe, well under the mark. My argument is that among the reasons which account for these figures, showing the difference between the number of Parliamentary voters and the number of inhabitant householders, is the difficulty of the process connected with registration. If you are to reduce the qualification, it follows that it will be expedient to have two registrations in the year. It is of no use to reduce the period of residence unless you have a corresponding increase in the facilities for getting on to the register. The lists are now made up in July, and the first revision takes place between September 8 and October 12. The first registration comes into force on January 1, and under our proposal will last until June 30. We propose to have an additional making-up of the lists in January, and another revision between March 8 and April 12, the register so revised remaining in force from the 1st of July to the 31st of December. It is not necessary to state in the Bill the date of the second revision, because all provision is made under that head by Sub-section 7 of Section 66 of the Local Government Act of 1888. I may be asked by some gentleman why we should have more than a merely supplementary revision—why we should have more than a list which should be a kind of pendant to the main Register coming into force on the 1st of January. Well, Sir, that is a very plausible and practical proposition, for which there is a great deal to be said; but the answer to it, on the whole, appears to me to be that it would not reduce the expenditure, which is, of course, the great objection to a second revision, at all materially, except perhaps in reference to the single item of printing. Revision would be very expensive, and you could not admit new claims to the Register without clearing from the Register names that no longer had a right to be there. What is of more importance, it would be intolerable not to have your new list tested, and you could only have it tested in one way—namely, by some kind of revision in an open Court. No arrangement of lists by Overseers or other persons without testing or revision would be tolerable or possible. I am afraid that in the Registration Courts really almost everything is thought fair. The third proposal we make is one that was also in the Bill of last year, that is to say, that the law shall no longer require that the person or premises shall be rated, or that the name of the person shall be inserted in the rate book, nor is any person to be disqualified because he has not paid his assessed taxes or his poor or other rates if he is otherwise entitled to be on the Register. I need not say more on that point, because it was learnedly argued last year, amongst others, by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James), who is an expert in these matters, and it was pointed out that the supposed qualification of having paid the rates was not a qualification at all, but only an evidence of qualification. It is, of course, absurd to disqualify a man who has paid his rates in his rent simply because the landlord has not paid his rates. This is a thorough recognition of the fact that in our view the true principle of the franchise is residence or occupancy. I am only sorry that Parliamentary circumstances prevent our carrying out that principle more thoroughly than I am afraid we shall be able to do. Next, I come to a proposal which undoubtedly will be regarded in all quarters of the House as one of the most important in the Bill, and I am astonished when I remember that no formal proposal in that direction has, I believe, ever before been brought before this House. The proposal is that all pollings should take place on one and the same day. That is a proposition to which the Government attach the very utmost importance. I may be asked by gentlemen opposite why, if we attach so much importance to it this year, it was excluded from the Bill last year. The answer to that is a very simple and straightforward one. It was excluded last year because the measure of last year was confined simply and solely to the reform of registration. I confess that I have never heard any body of solid argument, scarcely even of serious argument, against that proposal. I think in all classes of the community, and, I believe in both Parties, there is a feeling, though it may not be as articulate in one Party as in the other, that all over the country the evils of a prolonged period of polling are as serious as they are numerous. To enact that all the pollings shall be taken on one day is a reform demanded by public convenience; it is a reform demanded by the commercial classes, and by all who want to achieve the very desirable end of lessening the expenditure of our electoral proceedings——

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): It will increase them.

MR. J. MORLEY: When we come to the Second Reading perhaps the noble Lord will show how it will increase them.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: A much larger staff will be needed.

MR. J. MORLEY: I will in the meantime call the attention of the House to what I believe is the fact, that last year, after the elections, the Associated Chambers of Commerce—so serious did they feel the evil of the prolonged period of polling to be—passed a resolution, or made a representation, to the effect that it was in the highest degree desirable that the polls should all be taken on one day. Does the noble Lord think that elections were cheaper in the old days, when you had the polls kept open for days and weeks?

LORD R. CHURCHILL: No; I did not say anything of the kind.

MR. J. MORLEY: Really the long period over which the pollings extend the present system reproduces some of those features of the old contests which seem to us so barbarous when we read about the old Westminster elections and the elections in the County of Yorkshire and elsewhere. It is the same thing, though not on the same scale. Well, in the interests of the labouring classes, and in the interests of the candidates themselves, we attach the greatest importance to this proposal. The House would, I think, like to know exactly what the details of our proposal are. The Bill enacts that in the case of a General Election the polling shall be on one day. This day will be fixed by the Proclamation which summons the Parliament. It is to be not less than eight nor more than 13 days after the issue of the Writ. Each Writ will command the returning officer to take a poll on the day fixed by the Proclamation——

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Only 13 days' notice?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will answer the noble Lord as I proceed. From the rule that the day of polling is to be the same in every Parliamentary electoral area we must make the not very important exception of the Universities, as long as that most anomalous element of representation exists. The House will wish to know whether we name in the Bill any particular day of the week which the Proclamation is to fix. I believe that opinion is not entirely unanimous on the subject, but we, at all events, propose to enact that the day is to be a Saturday. It is to be the second or third Saturday after the Proclamation. I think the noble Lord asked about the day of election or nomination?

LORD R. CHURCHILL: No; I asked whether the notice was to be only 13 days?

MR. J. MORLEY: No; what we say is that the day is not to be less than eight nor more than 13 days after the issue of the Writ. A word as to the day of election. The returning officer will fix the day of election or nomination. He must fix that day, which is at least three clear days before the day fixed in the Proclamation for the poll in cases where a poll is demanded, and it must not be less than two clear days from the day on which public notice of the election is given in accordance with the Act. There are one or two minor provisions which, though minor, are of importance. There is one affecting very remote localities, and is to the effect that the public notice shall be given by the returning officer on the day on which he receives the Writ or official telegraphic information of the Writ having been issued. The returning officer will on receiving such official telegraphic information proceed as if he had received the Writ. There are not many places to which that will apply, but there are some. There is another minor provision which will affect the comfort of Members of this House not inconsiderably. As the House is aware, Parliament does not now meet till 35 days after the Proclamation is issued summoning the Parliament. That, I understand, is a provision dating in spirit as far back as Magna Charta. It was apprehended that the King might get a snatch or scratch

Parliament of his own together, and provision was therefore made that Parliament should not meet till, I believe, 40 days after being summoned. We think we are a little more enlightened than they were in the days of King John, and we propose to alter the period from 35 days to 20. The result will be that Members of the House of Commons will have to spend 10 days less in waiting for the assembling of Parliament. The convenience of that is obvious. If an election takes place in the summer, and Parliament meet in August, as it does generally, for some small and limited purpose, nobody desires that Members of this House should spend 10 days more than they need in uncertainty as to their arrangements. I now come to the last set of the provisions of the Bill—those affecting plural voting. I believed it was my fortune to launch into public discussion the phrase, which was fancied at the time, of "One Man One Vote," and I rather plumed myself at the moment on the invention. But few people are so original as they suppose, and I was reminded by an obliging friend that the phrase was put forward by a certain Radical who was well known in his day—a Major Carter—who said "One Man One Vote, and every man a vote." In those days I did not, and in these days I do not, shrink from the second half of the phrase, although opinion may not at present be ripe for it. Perhaps the House will allow me for a moment or two in connection with this subject to make a little digression. I wish it to be understood that in no proposal we make in this Bill is it attempted to carry out to its full and logical extent the principle of "One Man One Vote." I am given to understand that even any modified approach to that system will be met by the rival formula of "one vote one value." Of course, it would be quite out of place for me to argue that controversy now, but, in order to bespeak something like a fair hearing for our proposals, I would point out that "one vote one value" means redistribution—the breaking up on a great scale of the boundaries both of boroughs and counties, and the disfranchisement of cities. [*Opposition cheers.*] I notice that one of the University Members cheers that. I am afraid it would undoubtedly mean also that gentlemen opposite would lose a certain number of what they regard as safe seats. That is not quite all. If you are going to have "one vote one value" you will have to redistribute at regular periods in proportion as your population changes. I do not fancy that the Americans are so enamoured of their arrangements in that respect that they would encourage us to enter upon that path. It will undoubtedly be said that any interference with plural voting, even such as we propose, is a weakening of the bulwarks of property. I do not believe the least in the world that if you abolished plural voting tomorrow you would impair one of the bulwarks of property. The extension of the suffrage in 1867 and 1885 has produced no sign whatever that the calling of a large body of our population into the management of their own Government has impaired any of the conditions of existence of any of the legitimate rights of property. Gentlemen opposite boast that they are the champions and protectors of property; but they also boast—again I am sorry to say not entirely without justice—that since 1867, in the great boroughs where the decisive preponderance of political power is in the hands of men who do not enjoy the plural vote, they have rather gained than lost ground. That does not look as if plural voting or any of these similar artificial devices were indispensable from the point of view of property. I am as much for protecting the just and legitimate rights of property as any gentleman opposite. But there is, besides the electoral fact to which I have called attention, another fact—namely, that the diffusion of property amongst the humbler classes is very much wider than is commonly supposed. If that be so—and hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to admit it—it weakens the argument of the necessity of protection of property by the plural vote. Even if the diffusion of property were not wider than it is sometimes represented as being, and even if there were not in our countrymen that inbred integrity of which great statesmen before now have boasted, if there were not reasons to have full confidence in the right-mindedness of our country, which I for one have an invincible belief in—even if that were not the case, depend upon it property would be in a very precarious position if it depended upon this paltry artificial device.

You will not protect property by the ownership vote, because, if you look at the Returns issued to-day, you will find that the ownership vote is possessed by rather less than 500,000 electors. Where there is an enormous electoral roll like ours you will not protect property by the votes of 500,000 electors, and you will not protect property by giving a man a vote in a constituency in which he has no specific local interest, and in whose concerns he never shows an interest except upon the day when he goes to give a property vote. You will not protect property by a system which multiplies a man's voting power on the strength of his having 10 or 20 petty property qualifications, whilst a man of far greater intellectual substance and equal social influence may not possess one-fourth or one-fifth of his voting power. I will now indicate the way in which we approach this problem, and attempt to deal with some of the abuses which have arisen in connection with plural voting. The Government are unable, in view of the circumstances which I have indicated, to deal in any root-and-branch manner with the unfairness and mischief arising from this system. The alternatives before us are all involved, slow and difficult processes. Last year it was proposed by the hon. Member for Norfolk that every ownership voter should be bound to declare when he claimed to be put upon the Register that to the best of his knowledge and belief he was not upon any other Register and had not claimed to be put upon any other. That is one proposal; but it would take a long time before that plan could become largely operative, because all ownership voters on the roll already would remain there. Therefore it would be a slow process, although, no doubt, in the fulness of time it would end in doing some of the things which we want. The Government intend to go further than this. They propose to restrict the voting of an elector to one constituency —that where a Parliamentary elector votes at a Parliamentary election in a given constituency he shall not vote at a Parliamentary election in any other constituency as long as the then current Register remains in force. He is restricted to voting in one area during that time. Of course, no elector will be allowed to vote twice upon the day of a General Election or on any other day. The House will ask how are you going to make sure? We propose to add to the questions which may already be put to an elector this question—"Have you since so and so," specifying the day on which the current Parliamentary Register came into operation, "voted at a Parliamentary election other than the election for this constituency"? Of course, any untrue answer given to that question would subject the elector who gave such an answer to the penalty which we specify. It was before the Government for a time whether we should not extend that restriction to the life of the Parliament—that is to say, that the voter having made his choice and option to vote in a certain Parliamentary electoral area at a General Election he should be confined to vote in that area so long as he retained his qualification upon the Register in force at the time. That proposal will, no doubt, lead, when we come to the Second Reading, to a serious discussion.

Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Does the Bill apply to the whole of the United Kingdom?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Bill does apply, with one or two distinctions, to the whole of the United Kingdom.

Sir C. W. DILKE: My right hon. Friend said that the Bill would apply to some extent to lodgers, and promised to explain to what extent, but he has not done so.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes; I forgot. As to the lodger franchise, that will remain exactly as now—that is to say, the lodger is not to be called on to claim again at the spring revision, but if he claims in the spring he will, unfortunately, have to claim again in the September revision. This is, I repeat, a scheme which we regard as moderate and rational. Our proposals establish a great principle of registration reform—that is to say, we aim at making the getting on to the Register as easy as possible for everyone who is qualified. We put partially an end to the irritation caused by the large invasion of outvoters, and we believe that on all the other points touched by our proposals they will strengthen in the highest degree the feeling that everyone who is qualified has a share in the institutions of the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to reduce the Period of Qualification for Parliamentary and Local Government Electors, and to provide for the half-yearly registration of such electors, and to provide for taking the polls at a Parliamentary General Election on one day, and to restrict plural voting at Parliamentary Elections, and for purposes consequential thereon.—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The right hon. Gentleman, at the beginning of his very clear and lucid explanation of the Bill which the Government propose to lay before us, rather regretted what he termed the new practice in Parliament with regard to First Readings. My Parliamentary memory goes back as far as that of the right hon. Gentleman, and I confess I am very much puzzled by that description of what I have always regarded as a Parliamentary tradition. When the Government of the day introduces a Bill of first-class magnitude it has been the practice to preface the First Reading by a statement on the part of the Minister in charge, and to follow that statement by a discussion not of a controversial character, but bearing on the question and elucidating any point which might have been left obscure in the original statement. If that practice was justified on previous occasions it is certainly justified on the present occasion by the importance of this Bill; for, although the right hon. Gentleman gave us from time to time, in the modest epithets he used, a sketch of the Bill, there can be no doubt it is fundamentally a Reform Bill, which, whether for good or bad, covers a great deal of ground, introducing important alterations in the electoral practices of this country. It is a Bill which, whether we approve or disapprove of its general principle, must have at every stage of its progress, from the first to the last, the critical examination and attention of this House. I will start the few observations I intend to make by saying that in many respects this Bill appears to be a great improvement on its predecessor. I think that in some respects it does not aim at setting up an entirely new and untried machinery for dealing with the voters on the Register. I always felt with regard to the Bill of last year that the whole apparatus which the Secretary for India proposed to set up was a new invention. It was so novel that I doubt whether the House of Commons would ever have been found to approve of it. All that has been brushed out of existence; not a shred of it remains, and so far from this Bill being in any sense a reproduction of the Bill of last year, the only points which the two Bills have in common are the shortening of the term of residence to three months and the abolition of the rating qualification. There may be some other points of resemblance, but I did not happen to notice them. I do not say that these are unimportant points; but it is a singular sight to see the same Government bringing in in two successive Sessions proposals dealing with the same subject with only two points in common. I will very briefly note the changes which this Bill introduces. The Government, I regret to see, have determined to adhere to the three months' residence. I am not going now to raise the objection which we raised last year, and which will be raised again this year, to this proposal. There is absolutely no difference of opinion in respect to the desire to see the present long time which may elapse between the day when a man becomes qualified and the day when he is allowed to exercise his vote lessened. I believe the right hon. Gentleman has understated the period at one and a-half years. I believe under some exceptional circumstances it is more than two years. I think the House will do all that it can to remedy that anomaly and diminish that injustice in so far as we can do it without introducing still greater evils into our electoral system. While I am in favour of the reduction of time, I think three months is too short a period. There is one fact we must bear in mind, and that is that we shall require to have a double revision. The strong objection is that it will be very expensive. I wish the right hon. Gentleman had enlightened us as to the source from which that additional cost is to be met. If the whole of the expenses, which at present are heavy, are to be doubled, if every constituency in the country is to have its rates burdened with that double cost, I think the right hon. Gentleman will find that there is a wide and well-founded objection to this part of his scheme. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has laid down the principle that elections for the Imperial Parliament are an Imperial concern, and I think he went further and said that it was an Imperial concern which should be paid out of the Imperial pocket. Although I do not now propose so great a change in the existing system as that—namely, to throw the whole cost of an election upon the Consolidated Fund—I do say that any new cost should be borne by this Imperial Parliament which, in the exercise of its will, chooses to remodel its system. It is unjust that the ratepayers should be saddled with the cost of the change. I hope the Government will very seriously consider whether or not in fairness they are bound to throw some of these charges on shoulders more capable of bearing them than the ratepayers. With this exception I see a very great advantage in the double revision, and very few corresponding disadvantages. The next question is the question of the rates, and on this question the Member for Bury (Sir H. James), a high authority, has, I believe, always been opposed to making the payment of rates a necessary antecedent to the enjoyment of the vote. I am perfectly aware of the force of the arguments which may be urged in favour of that view. Lodgers do not directly pay rates, and there is a certain anomaly in saying that one class must pay rates before they can vote, whilst another class is not required to pay. I also admit that there may be cases where, through no fault of his own, an occupier, owing to the non-payment of the rates by the landlord, may be prevented getting the vote. In such cases the occupier is made to suffer for the *laches* of the owner. It is an anomaly and an injustice, but I think it can be remedied by some scheme short of that now proposed by the Government. My objection to the scheme of the Government is that it has some tendency to divorce in the minds of the electors the obligations they are under to fulfil their public duties before they can enjoy their public privileges. As I have before pointed out, it is no answer to say that it is a local duty to pay rates and that the vote is an Imperial privilege. Our rates are not all local rates. To the greater extent the rates are not for local purposes. The education rate is not a local rate, nor is the highway rate a local rate to any great extent. When we call on a locality to carry out duties which are Imperial duties it is absurd to say that the rates are not paid as much for Imperial purposes as in the interests of the locality. Therefore, when I bear in mind how very small a part of the total burden is paid by direct taxation, and when I recollect how large a portion is paid in the form of rates, I do think that this House should not divorce the payment of the rates from the exercise of the franchise. To do that would be, in my opinion, to take a step backwards and not forwards — to make a change which would diminish and reduce the responsibility which ought to be associated with the exercise of the vote. I know that in a very large number of cases the Local Authorities look at this matter not from a broad point of view but a narrow point of view, holding that any provision of this kind would militate against the punctual payment of rates. I still hope that the advantages which I have urged, and others which I might urge, outweigh the arguments which I gladly admit, though I do not think they ought to lead us to the conclusion to which they have led the Government. I have now gone over all the points in which the Bill brought in this year resembles the Bill brought in last year, and there remain two great changes introduced by the Government which are not only innovations upon their own proposals of last year, but are a very great innovation upon the immemorial practice of Parliament. The first of these is the fixing of all the pollings for one day. The right hon. Gentleman has said that this is the first time this proposal has ever been formally brought before the House of Commons, and in that I think he is correct. [*Cries of* "No!"] I had assumed that the right hon. Gentleman had got up his facts; but, at all events, no Government has ever made the proposal. I can very well recollect when, in 1880, there was a great alteration in the balance of power as between the two sides of the House, the common opinion of the defeated Party, of which I was one, was that the disaster which then overtook us was largely due to the fact that in the popular elections in the spring of 1880 the tide had apparently set in in a direction adverse to the then Government of Lord Beaconsfield, that the rest of the community was as it were carried away by the rush of the stream, and that the results might have been different had all the elections taken place at the same time, so that one constituency could not have known what another constituency was doing. I do not know whether that explanation was sound, but it was given in good faith, and I have therefore felt that there was something to be said from our point of view for the proposal made by the Government. But I think the Government have shown great blindness to some of the difficulties which stand in the way of that proposal. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman said it would greatly diminish the cost of elections, but he did not tell us in respect to what items that diminution of cost would take place. Whether that was an intentional or an unintentional omission I know not, but I can at once suggest many ways in which the proposal will increase the expense, while on the spur of the moment I am unable to find any particular in which it will be diminished. It will certainly increase the expense of ballot boxes. Now you transfer the ballot boxes from one district to another, but you will have to duplicate the ballot boxes and the machinery of election if you carry out the plan of the Government. Nor do I believe this increase of machinery will be confined to inanimate ballot boxes. You will require a much larger electoral staff. You will want more polling clerks, and you will, undoubtedly, require a larger number of persons to superintend the elections. That is not all. There are parts of the country where at election times the excitement is so great that the presence of bodies of police is absolutely necessary. I make no invidious allusion to any particular districts. That excitement may change from General Election to General Election, but nobody in this House will deny that there are such parts of the country. If all the elections are to be held on one day you will either have to leave the police unsupplemented or you will have to supplement them by the military. Everybody agrees that the intervention of the military is, I will not say intolerable, but that it should be reduced to the lowest possible extent. I shall be glad to know how the Government propose to deal with the difficulty which must arise here and there, when the same officers are called upon to provide considerable bodies of police on the same day to a large number of different localities. That seems to me to be a grave objection to the plan of the Government. Another difficulty which occurs to me as attaching to this plan is that there must be considerable confusion when you are carrying on in the same town elections for two different places. You will have in the same town an election for the division of the county in which the town is situate and an election for the town itself. That must end in a good deal of local difficulty and local confusion which does not appear to have occurred to the Government, and which the Government do not appear to have any plan to meet. The right hon. Gentleman gave us as a last argument in favour of his plan that all those interested in trade were anxious to get the elections over in one day. I am not sure about that. I am quite sure they wish to get the elections over as soon as they can, and that they regard the period of a General Election as one of trade stagnation and trade difficulty; but if one day is to be devoted throughout the whole country to electoral purposes, that day will be a *dies non* for every other conceivable purpose, and it will be quite impossible to find other channels for doing work which is now possible with the elections taking place on different days. I think, therefore, that the Government, if they inquire, will find that the inconvenience will be very great to trade in having the whole of your commercial machinery stopped throughout the whole country for 24 hours. On the Continent they get over this difficulty by having the elections on Sunday. In France the elections always takes place on Sunday, and, therefore, they do not suffer from this particular inconvenience; but as the Government very wisely do not suggest any plan of that sort, we shall have one week in which there will be two days, instead of one, when all public business is forbidden. I think the Government will feel that these are objections of a rather serious character to their proposal. There is one other point connected with this question of polling on the same day on which I must say a word. The Government have thought it necessary to say not only that the polls shall take place on one day, but that that day shall be Saturday. There is a good deal to be said for Saturday in some districts, and a great deal to be said against it in other districts, and one of my objections to Saturday is that it throws the whole country in the same rigid and cast-iron mould. However inconvenient Saturday may be in one particular district, nevertheless that district will be compelled to have its election on that day. At present a large amount of latitude is left to the Local Authorities. They know the circumstances of trade, and they are able to judge the day when least inconvenience will be experienced by the election. The principle of local option is very inapplicable to some things, but I think it is not inapplicable to this, and I regret the want of elasticity which will be the inevitable result of the plan to which the Government have committed themselves. There is one other proposal in the Bill which will no doubt excite even more interest and be a more fruitful subject of controversy than anything to which I have adverted, and that is the abolition of plural voting, which, in the opinion of Government themselves, probably, and in the opinion of their supporters, certainly is the main object and justification of this measure. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to answer by anticipation the objection which he thought might be urged from this side. He said, "Gentlemen opposite pride themselves on being the special defenders of property, and they are of opinion that plural voting is a great bulwark. I will now set myself to show that the plural vote is not an effectual bulwark of property." I suppose we are all guilty of giving descriptions of the methods and aims of our oponents which they themselves would not accept, and certainly I do not admit that my *raison d'être* as a politician is to defend property. To defend property is a task which, I hope, devolves equally upon all sections of the House. I do not know whether all sections perform that duty with equal success, but I believe they all recognize it as a duty, and I disclaim for myself and my friends that we come here more bound to defend property or are less interested in other great public objects than any gentleman sitting on that side of the House. We hold that view strongly, but to suppose that we come here, or that we are sent here for no other purpose than to resist any attacks on property, is to give an account of us which we should be sorry to give of ourselves, and which I, for one, entirely repudiate. I go further: if we have supported the existing system of plural voting, we have not done so in the interests of property, and have not regarded it as a plan by which those who have may outvote those who have not. No such wild idea has crossed our minds. If the interests and rights of property are not safe in the keeping of the great mass of the people of the country, no bulwark, no petty safeguard in the shape of an electoral dodge, will have the slightest effect. It does not follow from that that we think the plural vote is either a grave injustice, or ought to be abolished. The right hon. Gentleman in various parts of his speech dwelt upon what I think he called the importance of giving effect to the will of the locality. Now, Sir, I am of opinion, and always have been of opinion, that the whole basis of representation in this House is a local basis, and that the various localities, when they send Representatives here, while conscious, of course, of the Imperial obligations resting upon them, must vote as localities, and have regard to the interests of localities, and it is for that reason those who are interested in a locality by the possession of property of this kind have a perfect right, by the immemorial traditions of our Constitution, to make their voices heard. The right hon. Gentleman found it very easy to denounce those who had a speculative love of constitutional symmetry. That is a very convenient argument when you are attacking those who wish to do away with an anomaly, but a very inconvenient argument to use when your whole case is that you wish to do away with another anomaly. In what interest are you attacking the speculative love of constitutional symmetry? You find an anomaly, or what you think is an anomaly, you start with the speculative maxim that every man should have a vote and no man should have more than one vote, and you attempt to carry out that purely speculative doctrine in this Bill. Then what are you but the advocates of a speculative symmetry, and who are you that you should complain of us? We say that if you mean to go in for speculative symmetry you should go in for speculative symmetry all round. I am not now, and never have been, one of that class of politicians who think that the gravest evil that can happen to any country is to possess a Constitution in which there are no anomalies. I should be very unhappy if I held that view, and I do not hold it. Our Constitution is full of anomalies. Every Constitution which has been of slow growth must be full of anomalies. I think you might spend your time more profitably for the community in endeavouring to pare the anomalies away one by one until you reduce the whole fabric to the symmetrical outline which pleases the lovers of speculative Constitutional symmetry. I want to know what excuse the Government have under these circumstances for asking us to touch one, and that the least hurtful, of these anomalies when all the other anomalies, injurious though they may be, are staring them in the face. Of course, everybody knows that when we talk of this House reflecting the will of the people of this country we are using a phrase which is fairly accurate, but which will not bear close examination, and I understand the whole object of the Government is to make it bear a closer examination in the future than in the past. If that is their view let them attack the gravest anomalies first and leave the minor ones till afterwards. And what are the gravest anomalies? The Government know perfectly well that the gravest anomaly in the distribution of political power and the gravest inequality does not arise from this class of plural voters, but from the way in which you distribute your seats. It is notorious, it does not admit of argument, that particular localities, particular districts, particular countries, have a far larger share in determining Imperial issues on which the House of Commons is asked to pronounce that they have the slightest right to, judged by population. For instance, if you are going to take the test of population, if you are going to lay down the principle that every man should have one vote and that no man should have more than the value of one vote, are you not beginning at the wrong end when you begin to touch this ancient franchise, and ought you not to begin with that Redistribution Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman only alluded in order that he might repudiate it? He said if you redistribute now you will have to redistribute again in 15 or 20 years. I think it is very likely you may have to do that, but nobody expects finality from redistribution, any more than from anything else. But are we to submit to all these anomalies now simply because if we do away with them now we shall be some day asked to do away with them again? I do not ask for a mechanical and automatic redistribution scheme such as obtains in America. It is not a method I should recommend to the House; but I do sincerely give the House this advice—we can tolerate and have tolerated for many years, and have done, I hope, good work under, a very anomalous system. It is a great waste of Parliamentary time and energy always to be dealing with your Constitution, but if you do resolve that you will deal with your Constitution, if you are driven on by the overmastering difficulties and objections you feel in dealing with the daily course of your work—then, by all means, set about the reform of your Constitution, but do it on some rational system, and do it by beginning with the gravest evils and not with the least. That is my advice to the Government. Considering that our whole electoral system was dealt with not nine years ago, I should say, let us submit to the obvious anomalies under which we labour, and let us go on and do the work the country wants of us without meddling with our whole scheme of representation. But if they will not take my advice upon that point, and insist upon bringing in a Reform Bill, let it be a Reform Bill which will reform what ought to be reformed—let it be a Reform Bill which goes to the root of the inequalities under which we labour, and then, Sir, I think the Government will find that they have behind them, not merely that body of persons who feel they may get some electoral advantage out of the change proposed, but the whole body of that public opinion which desires that this House shall be a faithful reflection of the people of this country.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): There are only two points which at this hour I wish to mention, and that almost in a single word. They are two points which ought, perhaps, to be mentioned to-day rather than reserved for the Second Reading. The first is, that it is a somewhat unfortunate fact that owing to the form in which the title of the Bill has been drawn and its contents described, the greatest of all the registration difficulties of the present time in the United Kingdom cannot be remedied in this Bill. I mean those which concern the case of Ireland. As regards England and Wales especially, we have now a reformed system of registration through the indirect effect of the Local Government Act of last year, but as regards Ireland the state of registration is a disgrace to the United Kingdom, and it prevents the electoral system of

Ireland being that of a civilised country. It is a very unfortunate fact that, owing to the way in which this Bill is constructed, it will be impossible for us to remedy it in the provisions of this Bill. The other point I wish to name is one in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. From his speech I am afraid it will go out to his great Party in the State that the plan which is advocated by all—namely, the putting an end to the period of residence, which may be 2½ years, and which is in reality, I believe, always nearly two years, has been put an end to by the substitution of a period of three months. That is not what the Bill proposes. The Bill proposes a period, which is a period of 9 or 10 months in the sense in which it is now 1½ years at least. I say that for this reason: If you take the dates which were named by the right hon. Gentleman—namely, the present date of three months up to July, and the Register coming into force on the 1st of January after, that will be a period of nine months. If you take the dates which were in the Bill of last year, the 24th of June and the 24th of March, that will be a period of a little over ten months before a man can get on the Register, and therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition declares his wish to greatly shorten the present far too long period of registration, he must remember that the period proposed by the Bill is not a period of three months in the sense of his remarks, but, on the contrary, is a period of 9 or 10 months, as the case may be. Other remarks I should like to offer on this Bill may be offered on the Second Reading, when, no doubt, the House will have an opportunity of debating the large question raised, but I thought these two remarks were appropriate to the present stage of the Bill.

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): Mr. Speaker, when in the year 1892 my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax introduced a Registration Bill, and when last year the Government introduced a similar Bill, there were some—I for one—who were glad enough to be able to give their general support to those Bills. For they were purely Registration Bills; and were apparently framed with the genuine purpose of increasing the number of electors. There was no disenfranchisement in them, and, as far as could be judged, they were genuine attempts to improve our registration system without consideration of any advantage to any Party in the State. I am afraid a marked difference exists between the two former Bills and the one which is now submitted to us. In the first place, this Bill is a great disfranchising Bill, and, as Mr. Disraeli once said, the man who proposes disfranchisement must fully prove his case. I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without asking the House to consider the very important propositions which this Bill will place before Parliament and the country. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant spoke of this Bill as if it would only disfranchise the ownership voter, and, as showing what was in his mind, he mentioned a figure approaching some half million of electors. That is an entire mistake. The statement represents but a small portion of those who will be disfranchised under the Bill. It is not the ownership voter we care most about. It is not the non-resident voter whose interests alone we seek to protect. The voter we have to protect forms, I believe, a far greater class, and one of greater importance, than the ownership voter. It is the occupation voter, who exists under a franchise created not of olden time, but by the provisions of the Act of 1832. The Reform Act brought into existence a very large class of voters which year by year has been extending itself, and will, in the future, go on extending itself. You have the men who in large towns carry on their business. They are to be found, of course, in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and all large towns. They are subject to the rating that exists in the towns. They have the greatest interest in those commercial localities, but none of them, or at least few of them, live there. The majority pass away into the neighbouring counties, and they have a vote for those counties. You are about to disfranchise them. My right hon. Friend speaks as if they were of no account, as if he had never even heard of them. But this is the double voter we have to consider. You cannot treat him as non-resident. He does not come to the locality only on the day of an election. Every day of his life he spends half in the place where he carries on his business, and half in the county where he has his home; where he is equally subject to taxation, where he has equal local interests; and yet you propose to disfranchise him in one of these two localities. This not only applies to men of property, but to some extent to workmen. Through the extension of small holdings, for example, some portion of this class have now two votes. So far as we can gather from the statement of the Minister, we are now asked to cast these men on one side, because, forsooth! they only appear "on the day of an election." The Chief Secretary and also the Leader of the Opposition referred to some observations of mine in respect of rating. I did express the view that, if you look at the matter historically, rating is only evidence of property qualification, and not qualification itself. But, having made that statement, I had a large correspondence, in which some arguments were put forward which cannot but be regarded as of great weight. They ought at least to be regarded with great weight when you are altering your Register by disfranchising men of substance and who have interests in the locality. It was pointed out to me that if you enfranchise all men who do not pay rates—I am not speaking of compound householders—who being liable to pay rates do not pay them, you are enfranchising a great class, a class of defaulters. I was asked by my correspondents whether it would be benefiting the State to enfranchise defaulters, oftentimes intentional defaulters. I am bound to say that is a strong question to put to ourselves now. If you are going to take off the Register those men who fulfil every obligation and have interest in the State and in localities, should you at the same time enfranchise those men who are defaulters? One other practical question must be considered. The best collector of rates is the registration officer. There is many a man who never would pay his rates unless he knew he would be struck off the Parliamentary Register, with the consequent result that the fact of non payment would be disclosed and a certain social disgrace would follow. Once tell a man that, whether he pays his rates or whether he does not, he will be treated for political purposes in the same way, you will, as was pointed out to me, add a great incentive to the non-performance of a duty which every citizen ought to discharge. I said of the two previous Bills that they were not intended for the benefit of either political Party. If, now, I approach this Bill with suspicion in my mind it arises from the statements of Members of the Government. The Home Secretary, in dealing with the House of Lords, shook his finger at them and said, "Let us catch them touching a Registration Bill, and we will soon dissolve Parliament." Is this Bill introduced for the purpose of securing the Dissolution of Parliament? Then, Sir, I noted in this morning's journals a report of a speech made by my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General. I presume his name will be on the back of the Bill, for the names of Attorneys General do sometimes appear on the back of Registration Bills. He stated with exultation that the Government would to-day introduce a Bill for the purpose of registration, the result of which would be to secure in the constituency in which he was speaking, now represented by a Conservative, the return of a Liberal Member. Before we accept the introduction of this Bill we should like to know from my hon. and learned Friend what are the clauses of this Bill which will secure the return of a Radical Member for Marylebone. For what will effect such a result in Marylebone will do the same in many other constituencies. Therefore the Government must not say this is a Registration Bill of a patriotic character, introduced merely for the purpose of placing voters on the Register and extending the Register. Nor can the Government expect hon. Gentlemen not to criticise this Bill under the circumstances I have pointed out. At every stage we will be endeavouring to obtain from the Government or from our own investigation what is the clause and what are the provisions that will effect the object indicated by the Attorney General. Last year's Bill contained a provision which some of us thought to be wise and just, and that was to allow greater facility for lodgers being placed on the Register. It was an open secret that supporters of the Government representing county constituencies objected to that provision. It is dropped out now. Why is it dropped out? The Chief Secretary gave as a reason that it was "going deep into franchise" to give greater facilities for the registration of voters. Does not the right hon. Gentleman "go deep" into franchise when he disfranchises some 1,000,000 electors? He goes deep enough into franchise in one direction, but he refuses to touch this question of the registration of voters, which was thought wise when the Government proposed it last year. No; my right hon. Friend must get a better argument than that for seeking to prevent lodgers having greater facilities for registration. It is no use to tell us it is going too deep into franchise, and we cannot have it. There are points in the Bill that will require great practical attention. I note that the ownership voter who travels from county to county is to be disfranchised; but when the Government come to defend that disfranchisement as a matter of principle they will have to explain how it is they can let this double voter vote at bye-elections. That a man, having the requisite property qualification, should be able to go into 10 counties and vote at bye-elections, and not be able to vote at General Elections, I do not at all understand. Again, this question of voting on one day is a most serious question for the convenience of localities, and this will have to be borne in mind when we reach the Committee stage of the Bill. To take the vote upon Saturday represents in most counties in England taking it upon market day, and in boroughs it represents taking it on the day when the working man's wife purchases the goods for the following day or week. It represents by far the busiest day of every tradesman, and I would remind the House that members of one persuasion have great objection to recording their votes on a Saturday. There is another matter—the time to be allowed after the Dissolution before the elections take place. We do not want to increase the time in the boroughs in order to meet the case of the counties, and at the same time it may not be well to decrease the time in the counties. Anyway, it should be remembered that increase in the time means increase in expenses and increased injury to business. I will not say more on the First Reading of this Bill. It is a Bill full of objectionable provisions, and they will have to be most fully discussed at a later stage. This measure is a reforming Bill of the gravest importance, and never ought to have been called a mere Registration Bill.

*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, that this was one of the measures of the Government brought in under a misnomer. He considered it a gerrymandering Bill rather than a Registration Bill. Everyone agreed that there was a great deal needing change in the present registration system. For instance, 12 months was too long a qualifying period; but when they set about remedying the defects in registration they should not close their eyes to the enormous anomalies in redistribution. He should not have objected to many of the provisions of the Bill if it had been accompanied by a fair redistribution scheme. But this really was a gerrymandering measure. Why should they continue a system under which five men in London had only the same power of voting as one man in Ireland? If the Government were really honest in their profession they would have introduced a fair system of redistribution which would have made all votes, as far as possible, of the same value, and made the House more thoroughly representative of public opinion throughout the country. Of course, it was not possible to make votes absolutely and mathematically alike in value; but there was no conceivable reason why Ireland should continue to send to the House 25 more Members than it was entitled to, while London sent 25 less than its population entitled it to have. With regard to having the elections on one day, he thought it would have some disadvantages, but still he was inclined to look favourably upon it if it were accompanied by a complete change in the present machinery for conducting elections. There must be a returning officer for every place returning a Member. At present the returning officer for Islington and Paddington was the same, though there were six constituencies and six Members; and, of course, unless there was a returning officer for every constituency, it would be difficult to carry out the elections on the same day. He was surprised that the Government had determined that Saturday should be the day on which all elections should take place. He remembered in the Election of 1885 that his opponents got the polling fixed for a Saturday, as they were convinced it would give them a great advantage; but he was glad of it—he thought Saturday on the whole a good day for the elections, though it was inconvenient to the tradesmen class—for the more electors polled the better, he believed, it would be for him and the principles he represented. But what the House was asked to do by the Bill was to perpetuate all the worst anomalies of the present electoral system. The Bill was really, truly, and entirely a Party move; and was so arranged as to give all the advantages to the Government. The whole machinery of elections was to be made subservient to Party purposes. The Bill had many defects. A really extraordinary omission from it was a provision to enable lodgers to get on the Register. He considered that a lodger had as much right to be on the Register as anybody else, for he had as much interest as anybody else in the welfare of the country. But the Bill was not a Bill to increase voters, but was a Bill to gerrymander the constituencies. If the Conservative Party allowed the Bill to pass in its present condition they would be digging a pit for themselves; they would be playing into the hands of the Government, and assisting in improving by unfair means the position of the Government in the country.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I only rise to appeal to the House to allow the Bill to be introduced and printed, in order that it may be placed properly before the House and the country for discussion. It is true that when a Bill of large political importance is introduced criticisms are offered on the First Reading, but that is not considered a stage at which full discussion can be taken. I hope, therefore, that the House will allow the Bill to be read a first time.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said that, notwithstanding the appeal which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had addressed to the House, he thought it right to say a few words on this Bill. No one could imagine that the Leader of the Opposition would purposely mislead the House, but the right hon. Gentleman in repeating a statement made by the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, said—and it was only right that he should be contradicted on the point—that the proposal incorporated in the Bill for having all the elections on one day had never been made to the House before. Why, for the last six or seven years Bills had been before the House embodying that very principle. The fact might have escaped the notice of the right hon. Gentleman, but it was due to their humble servant to say that he had had such a Bill before the House for the past seven years, and similar Bills had been introduced by his hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and the hon. Member for Kilkenny. They also proposed in those Bills that the period of qualification should be three months, and that the Register should be made out twice a year. He was glad, therefore, that the Government had seen their way to introduce into their Bill principles and provisions which earned for those who first promulgated them in the House the sneer of being visionaries. He had not the slightest desire of prolonging the discussion, but he could not help expressing the bitterest disappointment at the disappearance of the registration officers proposed to be created in the Bill of last year. That omission would increase the burden which candidates for Parliament had to bear. Almost every Representative had to put his hand in his pocket to assist the Local Bodies in getting the voters on the Register. He knew Members who had to pay £300 or £400 a year to enable the Local Bodies to discharge the expenses incurred in getting the voters on the Register. Those expenses would, of course, be increased if the Register were made up twice a year, but they would have been rendered unnecessary altogether if the registration officer had been appointed. He thought the Bill of last year was a far better measure. Several of the best proposals of the Bill of last year were dropped out of the present Bill; but, nevertheless, he welcomed this attempt of the Government to settle some of the most glaring of the electoral grievances.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and Mr. Dyke Acland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 161.]

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [12th April] reported. [See page 226.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

Resolutions read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the first Resolution."

Mr. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, that as the Financial Secretary to the

Admiralty had made no reply in his speeches the previous day, to the request made to him to consider the advisability of opening up further avenues of promotion for warrant officers in the Navy, he desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would now make some statement on the subject.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe): It was quite impossible for me in the little time at my disposal when the matter was brought forward to have given any explanation. But I have already told the House that it would be necessary next year for Parliament to add to the number of warrant officers, and that with that view an inquiry was now being held as to the conditions of service of warrant officers. I hope in a short time to be able to announce the result of that inquiry to the House, and in the meantime I can assure my hon. Friend that the subject is receiving our most careful consideration.

**Mr. WEIR* (Ross and Cromarty) said, that on the previous night he had called the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty to some matters connected with his Department affecting the Highlands——

**Mr. SPEAKER*: Order, order!

It being ten minutes before Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this day.

LAND ACTS (IRELAND).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a Select Committee be appointed 'to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable.' "—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

Mr. SMITH BARRY (Hunts, S.): I object.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Mr. Speaker, was not the Question put, and is not the hon. Member too late?

Mr. SPEAKER: No; I had only gathered the "Ayes."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he will put down this Motion again to have the House treated in this manner?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I do not think the Government should be dragged through this proceeding in this way. I think the full responsibility of refusing this Committee ought to be placed on hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): We would really like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will put the Motion down again?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will put it down once more.

***Mr. W. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.): I beg entirely to disclaim having anything whatever to do with the obstruction of this Committee. I am entirely in favour of it.

The House suspended its Sitting at five minutes before Seven of the clock.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

SMALL HOLDINGS (IRELAND).

RESOLUTION.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.), in rising to call attention to the totally inadequate means at present possessed by labourers, by small holders of land, and by others in Ireland of obtaining land or of adding to their too small holdings, and to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland, and that, while the same machinery or councils used in England are not in use in Ireland, such existing machinery as Poor Law Boards or other public bodies or Government Departments should be used for the purpose,"

said, that there were some people who thought that there were no good things in England. He had no sympathy with that view. He was anxious to obtain for the benefit of the people of Ireland what things in England he knew to be good. Among these were allotments for the benefit of the labourers. At the present moment there were none of these in Ireland, though they were most necessary in that country, owing to the fact that it was so largely an agricultural country. They were also necessary from the fact that a very large portion of the population were unable to get employment. He wished to illustrate this fact by appealing to the English Members. There were many gentlemen in that House who had been very fond of visiting the county which he represented as tourists, and he wondered if any of them had travelled from Athenry to Galway. If they had they would no doubt have noticed that in the whole of that tract of country there was nothing to be seen but one long stretch of grass. This land was now unbroken by cultivation, and it therefore gave little employment to the labouring population. He wished to tell the House that he, for one, desired to see a change brought about in this state of things. He desired to see applied to Ireland what was now the law in England, that the County Councils should have the right to purchase one acre of land for the benefit of each labourer. The influence which such a law exercised on the landholder, and also on the agent, was a most important one. It was an influence which was very much wider than the utilisation of it by the county circles. This influence was that it induced them to voluntarily grant land to their neighbour when they saw that it was possible that they might in the future be obliged to do so by compulsion. Indeed, this Act would produce an effect which was a very wide one, as it undoubtedly would induce the owners to grant land much more freely, so that the effect which it would exercise would be a most widespread and important one. He desired to point out that in England they had lately considerably widened that law, and that now in the Parish Councils there was a power which enabled them to purchase as much as four acres, and to give it to the labourers, and to the people living in the towns who were able and willing to work it. He also desired the House to observe that the Parish Councils also had the power to obtain plots of land by other means. Where they could not see their way to purchase they had facilities given them for hiring. He would have this important benefit also conferred upon Ireland. The English population in the rural districts had been by this law placed in a splendid position. It was a position which enabled every man who had a practical mind and a desire to work to obtain for himself the means of earning his livelihood on the land. But in Ireland, where such a provision was much more necessary than in England, on account of the want of employment, nothing whatever had yet been done in this direction. He hoped that he would not be met by the Treasury Bench with the objection that no machinery existed in Ireland for the application of the allotments system. The people of Ireland did not care about the machinery. What they wanted was to get possession of the land in order to be able to work it, to earn their living and to maintain the wives and families who were depending on them for support. He believed the fault of the matter lay with the British Parliament. He was himself able to recall the fact that 20 years ago the Irish Members brought in a County Board Bill, but he was sorry to say that they had failed to induce the House to pass it into law. They had ever since been endeavouring to secure the passage of such a measure, and to get this local machinery established. He had no doubt whatever that the Irish Members would have succeeded but for the obstruction which they had met with in Parliament. But they were now willing to take such machinery as existed, and to make use of it in enabling the people to get the access to the land which was so urgently necessary for their material welfare. This necessity was just now a most pressing one. He hoped, therefore, that he and those who were acting with him would not be put off by Liberal Ministers in that House with any of those old and wearisome excuses as to the want of machinery. If they had, for instance, heard in Ireland that there was some English mowing machine that would be useful to them for the cutting of grass they would naturally desire to possess it; but if they were obliged to apply to the Government before getting the permission to use it they would probably be first referred to a Committee of the House of Commons. After that, they would be further referred to a Royal Commission. Under this obstruction system it would, therefore, be only after the lapse of years that they would be able in Ireland to use the mowing machine under the present Parliamentary system. As he had said before, the object of the Resolution was to help the poor who wanted to work, and who were in Ireland especially most deserving of sympathy, to obtain access to the land. He desired to again impress on the House the fact that the allotments system was even more suited to Ireland than to England. He would illustrate this fact by taking the case of a Northumbrian miner who was earning 7s. a day. To such a person the facility for getting land was not of the same importance as it was to the poor Irish labourer in the rural districts, where a man had to work for 1s. 6d. or even 1s. a day, and even at that pittance was not always able to obtain employment. The Irish people had been often accused of idleness by captious English critics, but a great deal of that idleness from his (Colonel Nolan's) experience was an absolutely enforced idleness. This was because the people had no facilities for utilising their unoccupied waste days. This they could avoid if they had access to the land and were given the opportunity of working it. He assured hon. Members that notwithstanding the defects of the present system they would like to have the portion of the new law bearing on allotments at once applied to Ireland. He would conclude by moving the Motion which stood in his name.

*Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's), in seconding the Motion, said, it was useful again to remind the House that although Ireland and Great Britain were supposed to be governed by similar laws, yet no attempt had been made to give to Ireland the advantage of the allotment system which prevailed in England. When travelling through the rural districts of this country he had admired the cultivation of land by labourers obtainable through the Allotments Act. He had seen small neat plots containing various vegetables which would not be otherwise procurable for the poor labourer, who generally received the lowest wage of any worker. Those products were the result of his own industry. Thus contentment was engendered, time utilised, thrift encouraged, and oftentimes partial poverty was at least averted. Now, this allotment system was relatively more urgently required in agricultural Ireland than it was in manufacturing England. But it was further needed because very many Boards of Guardians, principally through their *ex officio* members, had obstructed or absolutely refused to put into operation the Labourers' Dwellings Act, which was too costly and full of technical delays in administration to be really effective for the purpose for which it was passed. But, altogether apart and distinct from this objection, there were thousands of labourers living in small towns and villages to whom this Act was scarcely applicable, and, in addition, it might be undesirable in some isolated cases to disturb them from their present homes. Meantime, access should be given to the land to all labourers willing to work it for their own benefit. They were importing food products from almost every country, whilst millions of acres of their own land were going to waste, and labour was unemployed. In the year 1893 there had been an enormous decrease in the total acreage of land under corn, potatoes, and green crops in Ireland, and, consequently, less employment for agricultural labourers. Frequently, this meant either emigration or the union. Under those circumstances, it was not surprising that there was discontent and poverty amongst the agricultural labourers. Various Labour Societies were being organised—such as the Knights of The Plough and kindred Organisations. Their existence was a strong proof that immediate and practical attention, not mere verbal promises, should be given to this matter. Artizans working in towns were generally protected by Trade Unions, and it was not surprising that agricultural labourers, who had hitherto been the most neglected section of the community, should follow their example and endeavour to better their condition. It appeared to him that it was a legitimate function of this House to afford facilities to the Irish labourer to obtain a plot of ground, which he could rent on reasonable terms, and employ himself upon when work was not to be had or during his leisure hours. He maintained that an opportunity ought to be afforded to every industrious man to earn a living in his own country, and he ventured to submit that no more important question respecting the betterment of the condition of the Irish agricultural labourer could engage the attention of this House.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

"In the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland, and that, while the same machinery or councils used in England are not in use in Ireland, such existing machinery as Poor Law Boards or other public bodies or Government Departments should be used for the purpose."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he entirely sympathised with the object of the Motion. Irish Members, perhaps, had neglected the labour interest in Ireland a little too much. There were vast numbers of labourers in Ireland, and hardly anything was more melancholy than the sights to be witnessed in the small towns and in the villages, wherever one went, not only in the South, but in the North. He wished they could compel the owners of the town houses where the labourers lived to improve those houses. There was nothing more miserable than the condition of these labourers. The labourers on the land had been able to get cottages, but he rather thought the hon. and gallant Member was concerned about the labourers who lived in the towns.

Colonel NOLAN: Both.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said, that the labourers who lived in the towns, after a day's work, when they could get it—and it was not always to be got—returned to these insanitary houses and they had nothing to turn their minds to—no half-acre to work upon. They lived, in fact, in a state of semi-starvation. He was sure they all sympathised with the object of the hon. and gallant Member in moving the Resolution, but it was to be regretted that he called upon the Government to act "at once" in this matter. Having regard to the work of the Session it would be well if the Motion were amended in that respect, because it was obvious that a change of this kind could not be made off-hand and at once. He did not know what the hon. and gallant Member meant by the words in his Motion, "all the facilities for obtaining land" and applying them to "small holders of land."

Colonel NOLAN: I want the small holders to get more land.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said, he did not know that that would be an advantage to many Irish labourers. It was a good thing to give them land, but a bad thing to give them more than they could work.

*Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, he would give his hearty support to the Motion. A quarter of a century ago he stood up in favour of the Irish farmer, in this House, and he was satisfied that all who desired to see the material prosperity of Ireland could not do better than support the spirit of the Resolution.

Mr. CARSON (Dublin University) said, it was somewhat of a relief to find Members in all parts of the House representing Irish constituencies fully alive and agreed as to the importance of the Resolution, and he had risen before the Chief Secretary to lend what little weight he could in urging upon the Government the importance of the question. He could not agree with the hon. Member for South Tyrone opposite in his objection to the words "at once." On the contrary, they were the words of which he most approved, and he thought it would be much better for the House to employ its time in bettering the condition of the labourers of Ireland than in the proceeding of gerrymandering the constituencies of the country. It would not, therefore, cause him one moment's anxiety if the right hon. Gentleman were to advise the Government to withdraw the Registration Bill and to proceed with a Bill for assisting the labourers of Ireland. The hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) had said that the labourers of Ireland had been very much neglected in the past, and he (Mr. Carson) entirely agreed with him. In point of fact, he could not call to mind any Act, except the Labourers' Act, which in certain respects had effected considerable improvements in Ireland, that had in recent years been brought forward in the House of Commons for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the Irish labourers. Whilst in England there was always a large amount of employment and a considerable sum was annually spent upon the labour market, in Ireland the only market for the labouring classes was that of the land. If some Bill could be framed which would in any way mitigate the condition of the labourers he would do all that was in his power to see that that Bill became law. Why was it that the Irish labourers had been so much neglected? The reason was that the farmers had been thinking too much of themselves. He believed that gentlemen below the Gangway would entirely concur with him in the opinion that if there was one class more than another in Ireland which owed a debt they never could pay to the labourers it was the farmers. Having regard to the land legislation that had been passed by Parliament and to the benefits that had been conferred on the farmers of Ireland, it was really time that Parliament should turn its attention seriously to the question of what could be done for the labourers of Ireland. He read recently with great disappointment that in one part of Ireland—he believed it was on the O'Grady estate—where the farmers had acquired their farms under the Purchase Acts one of their first acts was to turn out every small holder who was in possession of land under previous Land Acts. This was a poor way of recompensing the labourers for having assisted the farmers in the land agitation. He really thought the farmers ought now, having received the benefits of land legislation themselves, to turn their attention to the accomplishment of something for the labourers. Whilst he was entirely in accord with the principle of the Resolution, there would be in his view considerable difficulties in applying it. In considering the question of procedure it was impossible to lose sight of the differences which existed between the two countries. In the first place there were no County Councils in Ireland, and in the second place there were no Parish or District Councils. Why was this the case? [Mr. J. MORLEY: Hear, hear!] The right hon. Gentleman cheered ironically. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman see that Ireland was included in the Parish Councils Bill? No doubt the right hon. Gentleman would say that Ireland must wait for Parish Councils until she got Home Rule. That meant that she must wait for Parish Councils until the English people had been educated up to Home Rule, and, according to the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton), it would even after that take eight years to pass a Parish Councils Bill. It would not be difficult to find the proper method of carrying out the Allotment Acts in Ireland. The view he would put forward was that the proper way to put the Acts in operation would be through the Land Commission, which could be authorised to afford facilities to labourers to acquire small holdings, and in course of time could enable them to purchase such holdings. He must admit that, as far as he knew, he had never seen any disposition on the part of landlords in Ireland to voluntarily grant small allotments of land. He could never understand why landlords either in Ireland or in England should grudge a little land for allotments when in many cases they had land lying idle. No doubt it was necessary to be careful to adopt proper machinery. Though the procedure was somewhat cumbrous under the Labourers' Acts, it was not a bit too cumbrous in times of excitement in Ireland to prevent injuries being done to owners of property. Time after time the Acts had been put into operation against particular farmers or landlords, not in the real interests of the labourers but for what he might call Party purposes. He gave the Resolution every support as regarded principle, and he hoped that some Bill might be introduced to give it practical effect. If the hon. Member went to a Division he regretted to say he could not support the Motion, not from any want of sympathy but because he was paired with a Nationalist Member who, if he were present, he had no doubt would vote in favour of the same Amendment.

MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) expressed his sympathy with the Motion. He pointed out, however, that it would be more applicable to the Provinces of Leinster, Connaught, and Munster than to the North of Ireland, for in Ulster the farmers as a general rule—of course, there were exceptions—had well-housed their labourers. [An hon. MEMBER: No, no.] He said as a general rule. He was speaking of the portion of the North of Ireland he was acquainted with. He knew there were portions of County Monaghan which, although portions of Ulster, were not geographically portions of Ulster. They were not portions of Ulster that they, the Unionist Members, looked upon as Ulster. He thought, therefore, the Resolution of the hon. and gallant Gentleman was rather too wide, and, personally, he would confine it and limit it to the suggestion thrown out by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. He considered that if the Government could see their way to pass some Act giving power to the Land Commission to make allotments adjoining towns and villages in Ireland—which, at the present time, was the subject of so much heart-burning in connection with the question of town parks—it would be a move in the right direction. He wished to express his sympathy with the general principles of this Resolution, and his regret that owing to being paired he should not be able to record his vote for the Resolution, which he should otherwise have been happy to do.

General GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) should be glad to go into the Lobby in support of this Resolution, but he hoped the Chief Secretary would obviate the necessity for a Division by giving them some assurance on the subject. He believed that the provision of small portions of land for the Irish labourers would do more to make peace than almost anything else. Whilst he was strongly opposed to what was called Home Rule, he was very anxious that the people of Ireland should have all the advantages the people of England had, and if the Chief Secretary could bring in a Bill to give the labourers what had been suggested, he would find him (General Goldsworthy) an ardent supporter of such Bill.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said, the labourers of Ireland were so long an unfriended class that he, for his part, heartily welcomed the accession of any new friends, and many new friends of the labourers of Ireland had appeared on the scene to-night. He thought, however, that human patience, especially the patience of those who had endeavoured to befriend the labourers of Ireland when others were indifferent, was too severely tried when hon. Members, such as the hon. Members for South Tyrone and Dublin University, rose in this House and suggested that the labourers of Ireland had no friends before their time. He did not wonder so much at the Member for the University of Dublin—an experienced lawyer but a very juvenile legislator—but he did wonder at the Member for South Tyrone, who had been in the House for years, who knew that at the instance of the Irish Nationalist Members the first of the Labourers' Bills was passed, that they expended much care and labour upon it, that they succeeded in passing two amending Acts, and that from the year 1885 down to the present hour, almost 10 years, not a Session had passed and rarely had a week elapsed but they had endeavoured by Motions and questions in this House to induce the Government of Ireland and the Local Government Board in Ireland to compel the Boards of Guardians to do their duty, and especially the Boards of Guardians, which were dominated by the political friends of the Member for the University of Dublin. He reminded the hon. Member for South Tyrone of these things, and also of the further amending Bills which they had unsuccessfully promoted because of the Rules of this House which hampered the powers of private Members.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I quite acknowledge the work that has been done for the labourers on the land, but my remarks were obviously directed to the labourers in villages and towns who had not got any land.

Mr. SEXTON said, that the Irish Members had also endeavoured to extend to the labourers of the villages and towns the facilities afforded the rural labourers of Ireland by the other Acts, and he would point out to the hon. Gentleman that upon the Order Paper of the present Session Members of the Irish Party had obtained first place of Wednesday, the 30th of May, for a Bill to amend the constitution of the Board of Guardians, that had the administration of the Labourers' Acts, and to make Irish Guardians, as English Guardians would be under the Local Government Act, purely elective bodies. When the Boards of Guardians passed into that condition, and not before, he believed they would be trustworthy administrators of the laws relating to the labourers. Again, on the 6th of June, the Irish Nationalist Party had obtained first place for a Bill to amend the Labourers' Act; and he would, therefore, point out to the hon. and gallant Member for Galway that the Party to which he (Mr. Sexton) belonged had used the advantages afforded by the ballot to obtain first place on Wednesdays for two Bills of the nature he had indicated. Whatever might be the defects of the hon. and learned Member for the Dublin University, he was not a man deficient in courage, but he certainly had shown more than his usual courage this evening in appearing as the champion of the labourers. The Chief Secretary for Ireland suggested across the Table that the argument of Wednesday evening had not been borne in mind. There was something more than the argument of Wednesday evening; there was the vote. He believed the hon. and learned Gentleman voted on Wednesday. [Mr. Carson: Hear, hear!] He believed he voted against the Bill. [Mr. Carson: Hear, hear!] He was sure the hon. and learned Gentleman would not vote against the Bill without reading it. In the Bill of Wednesday there was a provision to pass over immediately £30,000 a year for the benefit of the labourers of Ireland.

Mr. CARSON: There was also a provision basing rents on prairie value.

Mr. SEXTON: And yet that clause for the benefit of the labourers did not qualify or mitigate the opposition of the hon. Gentleman to the Bill. He did not differentiate that clause against any other, but voted as heartily against that clause as against the rest; and he was entitled, therefore, to say that when the hon. and learned Gentleman on Wednesday voted against a Bill to allocate £30,000 a year for the purpose of providing labourers' cottages—which would provide 300 cottages and 300 acres of land each year—his position of appearing as the champion of the labourers of Ireland upon the succeeding Friday was one open to moderate comment. If the Labourers' Acts had proved inadequate, as he sorrowfully admitted they had, who was in fault? The learned Gentleman applied himself—acting under political motives which no Member of Parliament could mistake—to endeavour to sow dissension between the farmers and the labourers of Ireland. They knew the object. He had to tell the hon. Gentleman that where the farmers of Ireland controlled the Poor Law Boards, as in the South and West, the Labourers' Acts had been justly and generously worked, considering the grievous burdens of the poor rate upon a necessitous class, 8,000 or 9,000 labourers' cottages having been built; but in the North of Ireland, and where the political friends of the hon. and learned Gentleman controlled the Boards of Guardians, labourers' cottages could be counted by scores—he thought by units—and there were wide stretches of country where not a single labourer's cottage was to be found. In the presence of such a state of facts it argued great audacity or great belief in the ignorance of English Members, or in the forbearance of the Irish Nationalist Members, for any Representative of that class to stand up and talk about the neglect of the labourers of Ireland on the part of the Irish Representatives, in order to put himself forward as the Representative of a class who had been behaving justly and generously to the labourers of Ireland. He sincerely sympathised with the object of the Motion, and he admitted that the initial statement in the Preamble was correct—namely, that the means at present in force in Ireland for obtaining allotments were inadequate or had been inadequately worked. The hon. and gallant Gentleman suggested in his Motion that all the facilities for obtaining land possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland. What meaning did he attribute to "at once"? Did he mean that anything could be done except by legislation? Did he mean during the present Session? Did the hon. and gallant Gentleman mean that small holders should be enabled to increase their holdings by means of the rates other small holders had to pay? If that was the principle put forward, he should like to see it put forward in rather more detail before he committed himself to it. The Government had announced for Thursday a Bill to reinstate evicted tenants in Ireland. Was that Bill to be set aside? He said the Evicted Tenants' Bill represented the most urgent needs of Ireland, and was more likely to pass through its several stages if the Government were not asked to add another Irish Bill to their programme extending to Ireland the complicated arrangements with regard to allotments. It was only on Wednesday that they succeeded in getting the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Land Acts. Were they to abandon the advantage of the Second Reading of that Bill in order to embark at this stage upon this new and complicated scheme? The Motion suggested that the Poor Law Boards and other Public Bodies should be used for the purposes of the scheme. In Ireland there was no body even partially elected except the Board of Guardians, and to their constitution was due the failure of the Labourers' Act in Ireland. For himself he could not look forward with any confidence to the result of proposals which would place these mighty powers in the hands of Boards of Guardians. There was no other Public Body in Ireland except the Grand Jury, and that body was composed altogether of landlords. His contention was that the Boards of Guardians were not suitable to the work, as they were composed, to the extent of one-half, of landlords, and as to the Government Departments, to which his hon. and gallant Friend would resort as a last resource, they were the curse of Ireland. That was the common opinion of politicians of every shade. He declared positively that he was not prepared, either now or on any other occasion, to give his assent to any Resolution which suggested that the local rates of Ireland—money paid out of the hard labours of the people—should be administered by two or three gentlemen sitting in Dublin, nominated probably by a Tory Government. He, however, heartily sympathised with the object of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and, if he would leave out from his Motion all reference to "machinery," he was prepared to support it.

COLONEL NOLAN said, he was willing to meet the proposal of the hon. Gentleman, and to omit the words "machinery or Councils used in England," as he had suggested.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I often think that it is a striking instance of the irony of fate that I, who am one of those who strongly believe that Ireland is entitled to the conduct of her own affairs, yet on account of the exigencies of the Office which I have the honour to bear, it should fall to my lot day by day and almost hour by hour to interfere in reference to Irish affairs and to decide matters of this kind. To-night we have had a Debate in which a number of gentlemen from Ireland have taken part, and I am bound to say that I think this Debate is not otherwise than a memorable one. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who moved that Motion took a very easy and rather lax view of the terms of his own Motion. He said this was a Motion for conferring facilities upon the labourers in Ireland such as are enjoyed in England in reference to the acquirements of allotments, and that this was to be done through a certain Executive Body. I was amazed to see, as the crown and climax of this proposal, that if no other body could be found the executive work is to proceed from no less a hated place than Dublin Castle. The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite desires to see this reform carried out, and it is this important question that has brought us down to the House to-night in order to join issue upon it. We wished to hear what would be said by our Irish friends on the proposal that this great social reform should be administered from Dublin Castle—that dreadful seat of the Government not infrequently called the "Parliamentary Sink," and which was usually held up to public opprobrium. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has given up the question of the machinery, and so I will not go into that. I cannot help, however, remarking that it shows how elastic Irish politics are when my hon. and gallant Friend can so easily accept the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman. I suppose from what has been said that the same easy arrangements are to be found in the way in which hon. Members paired.

MR. CARSON: I think it is only fair to say that the right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the point that has been raised.

MR. J. MORLEY: I beg to apologise; but I think the combination of the pair I have guessed as the hon. Members alluded to make a very promising assumption for my remark.

MR. SEXTON: I understand that at any rate the hon.and learned Gentleman, who is one of the pair referred to, is absolved?

MR. J. MORLEY: I only mean that such a combination would have been in accordance with the proceedings of a Parliament on College Green. All such arrangements we know, of course, are "make-believes."

MR. W. REDMOND: Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that my hon. and gallant Friend has brought forward the Motion merely as a "make-believe"?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not made myself well understood. The question is, what view the Government takes of this Motion? As it is now worded, the Motion is an impossible one, because the hon. and gallant Member asks that the facilities should be "at once" extended to Ireland. If the hon. Gentleman means by "at once" this Session, then the House knows that the realisation of such an object is absolutely impossible.

COLONEL NOLAN: Why do you not bring in a Bill this Session?

MR. J. MORLEY: I really cannot, at this hour of the evening, and after the day's labours, argue that point at present; but the hon. Member knows perfectly well that it cannot be done unless hon.

Members for Ireland are prepared to sacrifice the Evicted Tenants Bill.

Mr. J. REDMOND: Sacrifice one of your English Bills.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member for Waterford asks the Government to sacrifice an English Bill. [A Voice: Yes: the Local Veto Bill.] So far as the Government have gone they have placed the Evicted Tenants Bill down for an early day, and when that Bill is disposed of it will be for me, as Irish Minister, to press upon the attention of my colleagues any other Irish Bills in addition to that and the measure dealing with land in Ireland. Everyone who examines the subject agrees that the Labourers' Acts applying to Ireland are cumbersome, dilatory, and expensive. When, however, I am asked to extend the same facilities to Ireland as exist in England without any provision being made for the machinery which exists in England, then I must say that I am being asked to take what is not a very practicable course. The hon. and learned Member for Dublin University asked how it was that the machinery of County Councils and Parish Councils did not exist in Ireland as in England. I am amazed at that question, especially when the House recalls the project brought in by the hon. Gentleman's Leaders in connection with the extension of local government in Ireland. That project was so futile and ridiculous that it literally appeared for one night on the floor of the House and was never heard of more.

Mr. CARSON: The Local Government Bill passed a Second Reading by 95 votes.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Bill was admittedly an imperfect measure, and there was no serious attempt made by the Leaders of the hon. Member to create in Ireland that local machinery which would have enabled the Government to apply to Ireland the machinery of the Labourers' Acts. I agree with what has been said as to the position of the labourer in Ireland. The Reports made by the Land Sub-Commissioners as to the condition of the Irish labourer were about as disagreeable reading as anyone caring for the reputation of his country and Government could possibly have. I agree, therefore, that the matter deserves early and serious consideration, and undoubtedly it would be the business of any Government, if time allowed, to endeavour to legislate in the direction indicated by the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member. But as things are, and looking at the small amount of time at the disposal of the Government, being, as it is, already fairly divided between all those who have competing claims on that time, it is impossible for me to say that the Government could assent to the Motion if the hon. Member really means that the Government are expected to bring in a Bill at once. If the hon. Gentleman will strike out the words "at once," leaving the Motion an expression of an opinion that the condition of the labourers in Ireland urgently demands the attention of the Government, I shall offer no opposition to the Motion. The proceedings of this evening, however, only afford a further illustration of the unfitness of this Parliament to keep within its own hands the power of making laws for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman asks how it is that Parliament has not passed a Parish Councils Act for Ireland. The answer is perfectly simple, and the hon. and learned Member knows it very well. This Parliament is already overloaded beyond endurance, and it is absolutely impossible for us to deal with all the other claims that come to us from Ireland. In assenting to this Motion, I am doing no more than assenting to the statement that this is a claim which the responsible Government ought to admit.

Mr. D. R. PLUNKET (Dublin University): I shall not speak for more than one moment. The right hon. Gentleman has appealed to me in confirmation of a statement he made. He intimated to the House that the Local Government Bill introduced by the late Government was not seriously proposed, and that I, amongst other Members who were in the House at the time, was well aware that such was the case.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I beg pardon. If I used the word "proposed" I was wrong. I meant not seriously pressed.

Mr. D. R. PLUNKET: Well, if so, why was it not seriously pressed? I remember well the evening on which that proposal, which had been seriously made, and I believe might have been carried, into a useful Act of Parliament, was met by a well-prepared theatrical exhibition of contempt and ridicule. On what ground was the principle of the Bill resisted? Because the right hon. Gentleman and his friends had a far better plan to propose. And what was the result of their proposition of that plan? Not only was that plan overthrown; not only has it been now abandoned—— [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] I say it has been at present abandoned, and that the utmost desire of the right hon. Gentleman, and his friends, and of hon. Members from Ireland who sit below the Gangway is to put off as far as possible the decision of the people of this country upon the merits of that Bill. And what is the reason that the right hon. Gentleman advances this evening for not holding out any hope of giving effect to the object of the Resolution which is now before us? It is that in this Session, so overloaded as it is with business, it would be a farce for him to say he would introduce any measure, however good, which might be proposed by the Irish Representatives in addition to those already in the programme. And why is this? Because the failure of the measure which his Government introduced with a view of extending local government in Ireland was so much more a complete failure than that which he has this evening tried to treat with ridicule that the whole of the energies of Parliament has been exhausted in the abortive attempt to pass it; the whole of the first Session of this Parliament has been wasted, and what remains now of what is only an electioneering Session is to be occupied with the endeavour to put before the country a series of bogus proposals which no one has the smallest idea will ever be carried into effect, in order to give the people of this country the opportunity of forgetting the utter failure of the measure of local government.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND (Waterford) regretted extremely the turn the Debate had taken. He regretted the speech of the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton) and some supporters of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary (Mr. J. Morley). It would have been better, if the right hon. Gentleman would allow him to say so, if he had not used such a phrase as "make-believe." The right hon. Gentleman had said there must be some make-believe in a Motion which concluded with a recommendation that further powers should be given to "the Castle." There was no such recommendation in the Resolution, and he thought it would have been better if the right hon. Gentleman, in replying to an hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) who through a long life had been connected with Irish national politics and with industrial advancement and the welfare of the labourers in Ireland, had not directed against him that which he (Mr. Redmond) must regard, whether it was so intended or not, as a most offensive phrase. His hon. and gallant Friend, in bringing forward the Motion, had been guilty of no make-believe whatever. His hon. and gallant Friend desired to obtain from the House a declaration of principle and nothing more—a declaration that the same facilities should be given to the Irish labourers for obtaining allotments as had already been given by Statute to the English labourers. The right hon. Gentleman objected to vote in favour of the Resolution, because he said he conld not agree to all its details. He had, however, admitted that on Wednesday afternoons it had been his practice to vote in favour of Bills, many of the leading details of which he did not approve.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I never said "leading details."

*Mr. J. E. REDMOND said, that, of course, he did not know what would be the provisions of the Evicted Tenants' Bill which the right hon. Gentleman was going to introduce next week, but he knew that when Mr. O'Kelly, who was then Member for Roscommon, introduced a Bill which provided not only for the compulsory retaking of land for restoration to the evicted tenants, but for the compulsory expulsion of the "planters" without any compensation whatever, the right hon. Gentleman voted for the Second Reading. He should be anxious to see on Thursday whether the right hon. Gentleman would put that leading provision into his own Bill. He had listened with pain to the speech of the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton), because he had been unable to avoid the feeling that if the Motion had proceeded from another quarter of the House it would have received more indulgent treatment at the hon. Gentleman's hands. The hon. Member had appeared more anxious to pick holes in the phraseology of the Motion than to give a cordial assent to its principle, which, in the end, he had to admit was a good principle. The Motion was not to be treated as if it were a Bill. His hon. and gallant Friend had stated that he was willing to omit those portions of it which dealt with machinery, and to limit it to a declaration of principle. By a strange combination of circumstances the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) and the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton) were sailing in the same boat. They both objected to the retention of the words "at once," because forsooth "at once" must, in their opinion, mean the present Session. The hon. Member for Kerry, in order to show that this must be so, advanced the fact that they were only in the month of April. He (Mr. Redmond) would recall to the recollection of the House the famous Resolution passed on the 24th of March, 1893, declaring that the principle of the payment of Members should be put in force "forthwith." The present Leader of the House (Sir W. Harcourt), in his speech on that Resolution, asked what hon. Members imagined "forthwith" meant, whereupon the hon. Member for Preston interjected, "It means this Session." The right hon. Gentleman then said—

> "That is not the legal interpretation of the word. They believe that in accepting this Motion we accept it simply with the intention of carrying it out as soon as we are able to do so. In that sense I support the Motion."

And in that sense the Chief Secretary (Mr. J. Morley) and all the Members of the Government voted in favour of the Resolution. He (Mr. Redmond) failed altogether to see the difference between "forthwith" and "at once," and for his part he regarded the Motion, containing as it did the words "at once," simply as a declaration that as soon as possible facilities for acquiring allotments should be extended to Irish labourers. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) had said it was impossible to introduce a Bill on the subject this Session. Why? It was not impossible for the Government to introduce Bills which they had no intention of carrying. Last Session with a flourish of trumpets the Local Veto Bill, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and other measures were introduced by the Government as a pledge of the adherence to the great principles contained in them, but to-night the House was told that the mere introduction of an Irish Allotments Bill would prevent the passage of the Evicted Tenants Bill. Surely, the mere introduction of such a Bill, which would only occupy the House for a single night, could not by any possibility militate against the chances of the passage of the other measure. He admitted that it would be impossible to pass an Irish Allotments Bill into law this Session. But was there no value in introducing a Bill, and pledging its promoters to its principle? Had there been no value in such a process a great deal of time would have been saved since the present Government came into Office. If the Government were in favour of the principle of the Motion, there was no reason why they should not adopt it. Under these circumstances, he would suggest that his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) should stand by the words "at once," and should press the Motion to a Division.

*Sir A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, that a question of principle was raised by the Motion, and upon that question the only possible standing ground for the Unionist Party, in his opinion, was the standing ground of equality between the various branches of the United Kingdom. It might be difficult, and in some cases almost impossible to transplant institutions bodily; but the circumstances of the three countries were not so dissimilar that where advantages were conferred on one they could not, as a general rule, be applied to the others. The chief difficulty that had been raised on this particular question was that on the alleged absence of the necessary local machinery. He greatly regretted that no Local Government Bill had been passed for Ireland. It ought to have been otherwise, and was promised. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, however, cast some ridicule upon the idea of such rural institutions as allotments being provided for in the case of towns, he altogether forgot that the best instance of the working of the allotment system in this country and the very example on which it had been founded was that of Nottingham, one of our largest and most populous towns. He had himself frequently observed the miserable conditions under which labourers lived in the towns of Ireland, and he could conceive nothing that would be more useful than to give these men the advantage of being able to obtain allotments in their neighbourhoods. It was near towns that allotments could be made most paying and so most beneficial. To the tenants, allotments were a stimulus and a help: to the landlords they gave, in his opinion, at all events when near towns, one of the very best investments, whilst, in addition, they associated larger numbers with the land and so strengthened the landed interest. There was one special point of view in which allotments would be beneficial to Ireland, and that was in cultivating that collective spirit in connection with modern agriculture which was essential to its success. Some attempt had been made to establish a collective system in Ireland in relation to agriculture, and, happily, there had been some effort to give the benefit of an agricultural education to pupils in the elementary schools. In one national school in Ireland he had seen a better example of this than he had ever witnessed in England. A small farm was attached to the school he spoke of, and the children were instructed in the principles and, to some extent, in the practice of agriculture. The advantages of collectivism in regard to agriculture were apparent in some of the smaller countries of Europe, like Belgium and Denmark, and he had once heard one of the largest exporters of agricultural produce from Denmark to this country say that if agriculture in Ireland were more collectively treated it would become the great rival of Denmark in agricultural matters. He believed in the principle of equality of treatment, and of giving to all parts of the United Kingdom that which had proved beneficial in the others in cases in which similar conditions existed which would make the principle capable of practical application. He supported the Motion. He felt that the difficulty as to machinery had been to a great extent exaggerated. In the towns it already existed in the municipalities and town-commissions, and elsewhere, if necessary, and so great did he believe the value of allotments to be, that he would advocate the creation of machinery *ad hoc* to meet the necessities of the case.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) said, that as one who had consistently in season and out of season endeavoured to do what he could on behalf of the Irish labourers, he would like to take part in this Debate, and to say that he was absolutely in favour of the Motion. If the hon. and gallant Member who introduced the Motion allowed his mind to go back to the year 1888 he would recollect that at that time, when there was an Allotments Bill brought forward for the benefit of English labourers, he (Dr. Tanner) did his best to have the Bill extended so that Irish labourers would be benefited by it. He had already succeeded in getting one Bill passed for the Irish labourer, which gave him a half acre of land, but he found there was a lot of trouble experienced in getting the additional acre for him. It had again and again been pointed out that one of the great difficulties the Irish labourer experienced was caused by the intermittent character of his labour, and accordingly if he got an extra grant of land it must be for the benefit of the labourer and the ratepayer as well, inasmuch as it would keep him off the rates and give him an opportunity of cultivating the land. If it was done, they would raise a great weight and incubus off the shoulders of the labourers of Ireland. For his own part he regretted to say that cottages had not been erected in many parts of the country, and he hoped before long that every labourer who needed a cottage would have one.

DR. COMMINS (Cork Co., S.E.) said, that having regard to the practical unanimity with which this Motion had been received in all quarters of the House, he thought it would be a great pity if that unanimity was not utilised to further account. He thought that might be done by leaving out the words "at once."

MR. W. REDMOND: No, certainly not.

DR. COMMINS: And substitute for them the words "as soon as possible." He had great pleasure in moving an Amendment to that effect.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not possible now.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich) said, that if any alteration were made in the Motion at all it should be to say that this thing should have been done long ago. He had travelled in Ireland and had come to the conclusion that many labourers were occupying land which could not by any means produce a proper livelihood. It was full of water, and was only cultivated because the people could not get good land. Good land they ought to be able to get, as there was plenty of it. Labourers ought to be able to get a reasonable quantity of land—freehold land he preferred—on the principle that if a man was his own landlord he would not shoot himself. A great many difficulties would be got over in the future by increasing the number of freeholders and giving a larger number of people an interest in the soil. He sympathised with the Motion, and was surprised the Chief Secretary had not readily grasped the opportunity it afforded him of agreeing to do now, by means of a brief Act, that which ought to have been done before.

Mr. W. REDMOND considered it was most unfortunate the Chief Secretary should have met the hon. and gallant Member for Galway in the unfriendly spirit he had displayed. Irish Members had from time to time been held up to the censure of the country for behaving in a discourteous way. It was said sometimes that they could not treat their opponents with that courtesy which ought to prevail in the House of Commons. He did not think that in the 10 years he had been in Parliament he had heard even a much-despised Irish Member say anything so discourteous to an opponent as that he was guilty of a "make-believe" when he took the trouble to come down to the House and move a Resolution which was admittedly of a serious nature. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary must know very well that the Irish Members, with all their faults and failings, were not given to withdrawing anything to which they had committed themselves, and he strongly advised his hon. Friend to hold his ground, in order to show right hon. Gentlemen opposite that when he wanted anything to be done he must treat even a Member of a small Party with some degree of courtesy, and not accuse him of being guilty of a "make-believe," which was a most offensive term. He (Mr. W. Redmond) had been amused at the speech of the hon. Member who said that he quite approved of the Resolution, who spoke of the unanimity of the support it was receiving, but objected to the words "at once." He (Mr. W. Redmond) thought that if a thing was good it could not be adopted too soon. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said that a Bill could not be introduced on this question, because on Thursday he was going to introduce the Evicted Tenants Bill. The right hon. Gentleman affected to believe that the Mover of the Resolution and his friends desired to see the question of allotments for Irish labourers put before the Evicted Tenants Bill. The Chief Secretary knew very well that the supporters of that Resolution had no desire to interfere with the Evicted Tenants Bill, as to which they had all along been endeavouring to drag some declaration from him. The Government had engaged the House for a considerable length of time with the Parish Councils Bill and other measures which did not affect the Irish people, and he thought that at least the Government would undertake to prepare a measure in the interest of Irish labourers, seeing that they could find time to introduce Bills for registration, local veto, and other measures of that description. If the right hon. Gentleman would say that the Evicted Tenants Bill—for which the right hon. Gentleman seemed to have acquired a burning solicitude during the past few days—would be proceeded with and carried through this Session before the House was asked to undertake the cumbrous task of going into Committee on the Registration Bill, the present matter would be allowed to stand over. The right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well, when he taunted the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) and his friends with desiring to put the labourers of Ireland and these allotments under the system of Dublin Castle, he was insinuating what he did not believe. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman that the Irish people wished to rule their own country. He would tell hon. Gentlemen opposite that they hoped to control their own affairs, and to clear out Dublin Castle root and branch. He meant nothing personally to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley), but he and the officials of the English system would not be wanted in Ireland when the Irish people conducted their own affairs. At present he failed to see that there was any immediate prospect of Dublin Castle being done away with. So far from this Motion being a "make-believe" the hon. and gallant Gentleman who moved it was perfectly sincere at heart, his endeavour being to get a statement of opinion from the House, for something should be done to plant the people of Ireland on their native soil. He could assure hon. Members who were not intimately acquainted with Ireland that this was an extremely pressing matter. The Irish Members wished to get some employment for their people, and to put a stop to the terrible drain of emigration which was depopulating their country. This, as Liberal Members opposite must know, had gone on for years, because there was no means of obtaining employment for the people. He wished to say that his dead leader, Mr. Parnell, was the greatest friend the labourers of Ireland had ever possessed. Hon. Members near might wish to dispute this, but it was a well-known fact, which he now challenged them to deny. He cared not what man in that House had obtained the chance in the ballot or who had moved the Labourers' Act. They must all know, and know very well, that it was the hand of that great dead man which had drafted all the provisions of that measure, although others tried to take the credit afterwards. He not only drafted it, but he pushed it safely through that House. The men who had these cottages erected for them must certainly never forget that the whole of the work of getting that measure through Parliament was done by Parnell, who had always laboured to root both the peasants and the farmers of Ireland in the soil. He hoped his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) would press his Motion to a Division, and try and get the labourers facilities for getting at the land. If he (Mr. Redmond) was to be the only man with him in the Lobby he would insist on pressing this matter to a Division. He failed to see why heat had been imparted into the discussion. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laughed, but he could assure them that it was not he who had introduced it, but the right hon. Gentleman who had said that the Irish Members were guilty of a "make-believe." The right hon. Gentleman agreed with the Resolution in principle. It was simply a declaration on the part of the House that something should be done to keep ablebodied Irishmen on the soil of their country. On that declaration he should advise his hon. and gallant Friend to go to a Division.

Mr. PINKERTON (Galway) said, he hoped the Chief Secretary would not attach too much importance to the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down. He had only just returned to this country.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I represent as many persons in this House as you do.

Mr. PINKERTON said, the hon. Member had just returned from Australia, and this was the first opportunity he had had of unbosoming himself.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I have as much right to speak in this House as you. Your majority was only 50.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. PINKERTON said, as the hon. Member attached great importance to small numbers, a majority of 50 ought to appeal to his sympathy. The impression was not conveyed to his (Mr. Pinkerton's) mind that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary wanted to insult the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan). But there was a palpable attempt in connection with the Motion to play to the gallery, and the Tory support which it received was transparently dishonest. He did not know whether he should be in order in moving to leave out the words "at once."

*Mr. SPEAKER: Not unless the hon. and gallant Member's proposal becomes the substantive Motion.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, the hon. Member for Waterford had withdrawn the significance from the words "at once," which was the ground of his objection to them. The hon. Member said he did not understand by the words that a measure was to be passed this Session carrying out the purpose of the Resolution.

Mr. J. REDMOND said, he did not take it to mean that a Bill should be passed into law this Session. But he did not say that a Bill should not be formulated to carry out the Resolution.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, if it was clearly understood that by accepting the Amendment in the form in which it was proposed the Government were not pledged to do what the hon. Member opposite called "formulate a proposal to carry out the Resolution" or carry through a Bill this Session, he would accept.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and negatived.

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. SEXTON said, the interpretation given by the Member for Waterford removed any objection he had to the wording of the Motion.

Colonel NOLAN said, he would strike out the latter part of the Motion in accordance with the suggestions that had been made, and it would read—

"That, in the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland."

MR. J. REDMOND said, that the interpretation he put upon the words "at once" was, as he had previously stated, the same as that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer put upon the word "forthwith" when discussing the question of the payment of Members on March 24, 1893—

"That he accepted the Motion with the honest intention of carrying it as soon as possible."

MR. J. MORLEY said, he had stated the interpretation that he put upon the words, and it was in view of that interpretation that he assented to the Motion.

MR. J. REDMOND: What is it?

Words amended, by leaving out from the words "to Ireland," to the end of the Question.

Words, as amended, added.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, all the facilities for obtaining land now possessed by England should be at once extended to Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: The Clerk will now proceed to read the Orders of the Day.

MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) asked whether he could not move the following Motion that stood on the Paper in his name:—

"To call attention to the condition of the silk trade in this country, and to move, that this House, having regard to the lamentable decline of the silk trade in the country, is of opinion that a moderate duty affecting only an article of luxury ought to be imposed upon all imported manufactured silk."

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a question for me but for the Government.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's) said, that in such circumstances it had always been the practice to set up Supply again.

MR. SPEAKER: It is entirely optional for the Government to set up Supply again or not. A great deal depends upon the hour of the night.

MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT asked whether he was to understand that the Government were anxious that this question should not be raised? There was still half an hour remaining in which the matter, which was one of enormous and pressing and vital importance, could have been considered.

[No answer was given.]

SOLICITORS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 108.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Field.*)

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) said, that although he did not know much about the controversial details, he had received a communication from the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland stating that the Bill was in many respects an undesirable one, and he thought that before it was read a second time some explanation should be made concerning it.

***MR. W. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.) said, he would like to know whether the Bill had been printed.

MR. FIELD said, the Bill was printed last year.

MR. J. MORLEY said, it would certainly be impossible to assent to the Second Reading on this occasion.

Question put, and negatived.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 2) BILL. (No. 6.)

Read the third time, and passed.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 147.)

Read a second time, and committed.

WEMYSS, &C., WATER PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, under "The Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1867," relating to Wemyss and Buckhaven, Methil, and Innerleven Water, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 158.]

FRANCHISES (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Barrow, Bill to assimilate all the Franchises in England and Wales, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Barrow, Mr. Samuel Montagu, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Howell, Mr. Stewart Wallace, and Mr. Benn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 159.]

LEASEHOLD PROPERTY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill to enable owners or tenants having a vested interest in lands, houses, or business to acquire by purchase or rent the intervening period of term between the expiration of existing lease and the original lease, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Field, Mr. Clancy, and Dr. Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 160.]

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL.
(No. 112).

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Trade, &c.—Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Sir John Lubbock; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Heneage.

Ordered, That the Report do lie upon the Table.

SUPPLY,—Committee upon Monday next.

SUPPLY [12th April] REPORT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [this day],

> "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That a sum, not exceeding £1.771,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of the *Personnel* for Shipbuilding, Repairs, and Maintenance, including the cost of Establishments of Dockyards and Naval Yards at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1895.'"

Question put, and agreed to.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to.

IRISH EDUCATION ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 107.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put, and negatived.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (LONDON) BILL.
(No. 79.)

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

TREATY SERIES (No. 9, 1894).

Copy presented,—of Agreement between Great Britain and Portugal for the Insurance of Postal Parcels. Signed at Lisbon 10th March 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) said, he desired to call attention to the conduct of the Government. He desired to remind them that the Government had already robbed private Members of the time of the House. He had been fortunate enough in the ballot to gain second place to-day for a Motion of vital importance to a trade which was once a great industry—the silk trade of this country. The people were starving, and he desired to draw attention to the subject. For two and a half hours they had listened to a Debate about Ireland which the Chief Secretary described as a make-believe. At first the Chief Secretary objected, and then he accepted the Resolution. He wondered why, but he had since discovered that it was in order to burke inquiry. It was within the power of the Government to give him an opportunity to move his Resolution. He himself had no power one way or the other, but the Government had declined to give him that opportunity. He should take care that his constituency and other constituencies knew of the value to be put upon the protestations of the Government of their interest in questions which were not, indeed, Irish, but which were of vital importance to Great Britain alone.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.) said, he desired also to join in protesting against the action of the Government in preventing a Debate taking place, and affording the House an opportunity of hearing the views of the President of the Board of Trade on the subject.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at a quarter before Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 16th April 1894.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Viscount Ferrard — Viscount Charlemont — Lord Clonbrock (Claims to vote for Representative Peers for Ireland),—Ordered and Directed, That a Certificate be sent by the Clerk of the Parliaments to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, stating that the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom has reported to the House of Lords that the right of Viscount Ferrard, the Viscount Charlemont, and the Lord Clonbrock to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of him the said Lord Chancellor; and that the House of Lords has ordered such Reports to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland: And it is hereby also Ordered, That the said Reports of the said Lord Chancellor be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland.

GENERAL MAISEY'S "SANCHI TOPE."

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY asked the Under Secretary of State for India how many copies of General Maisey's book on the Sanchi Tope were subscribed for by the India Office; and if there was any rule as to subsidising authors out of the Indian Treasury? He said, the importance or non-importance of this question depended upon the number of copies of a book taken by the Indian Government. In this case General Maisey's book had been printed in London, so that the India Office would be responsible for subsidising it, and it was said that 80 copies had been ordered. In the case of the late Mr. Ferguson's *Serpent Worship*, a great deal of Indian money had been spent, as each copy cost £5, and a large number were subscribed for, and the utility of that work was questioned. The history of General Maisey's book was that as long ago as 1840, when he and General Sir Alexander Cunningham were subalterns, they met at the Sanchi Tope and made drawings of the sculptures, but the book had only been printed in 1892. Unfortunately, General Maisey was killed by a cab accident before his work was published, and General Sir Alexander Cunningham died last autumn, a few days after this notice was put down in the Minutes. Both, therefore, were indifferent to criticism. There was no fault to find with the plates and drawings, but the letterpress might have been dispensed with. General Maisey had endeavoured in his Preface to prove that Gautama Buddha lived 500 years later than the date assigned to him by all historians, and General Sir Alexander Cunningham, who finished bringing out this work, had found himself obliged to write another Preface contesting the views of his friend and colleague, in which he wrote—

> "I think that his views may have been biased by the pious wish to prove that Christianity was prior to Buddhism."

It appeared, therefore, doubtful whether the expenditure of Indian money upon such speculative printing was justifiable, and he must warn his noble Friend the late Secretary of State for India that if he had sanctioned this expenditure he would be laying himself open to the imputation of being half-hearted in his convictions, and of doing what betting men called "hedging" for the next world by backing the missionaries in India whilst he was harassing the established clergy in this country.

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA** (Lord Reay): My Lords, in reply to the question of the noble Lord, I have to inform him that five copies of the work he mentions were originally subscribed for, and five copies more were subsequently purchased by the India Office. The only Rules bearing upon the question of subsidising authors out of the Indian Revenues are those relating to the literary grant of £3,000 per annum, which sum has been set aside by the Secretary of State in Council to meet the expenditure, exclusive of salaries and allowances, for the purchase, publication, patronage, binding, and repairs of all books, maps, pictures, publications, and works of art of every kind. There is no special Rule regulating the subsidising of authors; but books bearing upon India or Oriental languages, which are submitted for the patronage of the Secretary of State, are dealt with on their merits.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT LUCCOMBE AND STOKE-PERO.

MOTION FOR A RETURN.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY called the attention of the House to the school accommodation at Luccombe and Stoke-Pero, on the property of Sir Thomas Acland; and moved for a Return of all schools in which alterations have been required by the Education Department since the Vice President came into Office in 1892. He said, when he intended bringing the subject of school accommodation at Luccombe and Stoke-Pero before the House in December last he could only have spoken of it from information. He had since visited that district and had seen the schools at Luccombe, Porlock, and Allerford. He had no wish to be the cause of expense either to the inhabitants of that district or to Sir Thomas Acland, the principal landowner in Luccombe-Allerton and Stoke-Pero, but at the same time he must point out the very different treatment meted out to those schools and to others in less favoured districts, and that the requirements of the Department under Schedule VII. had not been applied to Luccombe. The Luccombe school had neither class-room nor cloak-room. Cloaks were hung up in the porch. He did not say that either were required; but neither were they required in other schools which had been ordered to provide them, and the grants withheld where compliance had not been immediate. The Tilston school had been forced to incur an expense of £48 to build porches for cloak-rooms; everywhere complaints were made, and he could not do better than follow the Member for his division, the Eastern Division of Cheshire, Mr. Bromley-Davenport, who, speaking at Macclesfield on the 27th of February last, said that the Education Department was calling upon Christchurch schools to spend £100, and that the various denominational schools of Macclesfield would be called upon to pay a sum in the aggregate of between £1,000 and £1,500. He (Mr. Davenport) referred to Macclesfield having a

"complete education ladder kept up by voluntary effort without a Board school and without a school rate; and this system with which the people of Macclesfield were thoroughly satisfied was in danger because they had at the head of the Education Department a man who was the bitter enemy of denominational schools, who was the bitter enemy of the whole voluntary system, and who did not scruple to take advantage of the vast powers of his official position to force his own predilections upon the people of this country."

Mr. Acland had brought an Inspector, Mr. Scott-Coward, from Yorkshire, which had become too hot to hold him, and he had harried most of the schools in Somersetshire. He was told that that gentleman was a Roman Catholic, and therefore he might be more or less out of sympathy with the managers whom he had vexed. His district did not extend to the west end of Somersetshire, where Sir Thomas Acland's property was situated. The school at Luccombe was taught by a schoolmistress, and the average attendance was 29. When he visited it, the oldest boy there was 11, and he did not see any of those small infants that were now turning the schools into nurseries and over-crowding schools hitherto sufficient for the requirements of the Act of 1870. He called upon the Rector, the Rev. H. D. Acland, a nephew of Sir Thomas Acland, and asked him, "Are you faithful to your Church or to your family?" Unlike the son of the late Prime Minister, the Rector of Hawarden, who had incurred the risk of a reminder by his Diocesan of his ordination vows, he was able to say, with truth, he had been faithful to his Church; but that did not prevent him taking up the cause of his district and of his venerable uncle, and urging that they should not be put to further expense. After that he went near to Stoke-Pero, and then to Porlock and Allerton. At Porlock a new class-room had been built, but it was not yet occupied; the schoolmaster told him it would cost £120, but the Vicar said it was more likely to be £190. This addition was not ordered by the Vice President, but had been called for by the Department before his time. Sir Thomas Acland had no property in Porlock, but this school received many of the children from Luccombe and Stoke-Pero. Geologically, this district belonged to South Devon, and was included in the hunting maps of Devonshire. It had also a separate school district, and had nothing to do with the rest of Somerset. In 1790 the population of Stoke-Pero was estimated at 100, in 1801 it was 63, in 1824 it was 81, in 1818, according to a Return to the House of Commons, the children were taught to read by an old woman paid by the parish. Now it had no school at all. Stoke-Pero church and the house where there are most children is four miles from Porlock, but the road is so steep that it takes a boy an hour and a-half to come to Porlock. Other Stoke-Pero children went to an Exmoor school, also a distance of four miles. The population of Stoke-Pero had now fallen to 50. It was evident that only children above eight years of age could attend school. Most of the bye-laws sanctioned by the Department required children from five to eight years of age to go only two miles, and those from eight to thirteen years of age to go three miles. One of the new schemes proposed to give travelling allowances to children who might have four miles to go. He had been informed that Stoke-Pero contained 12 children of the age from eight to thirteen: this would probably give 18 of the school age from five to thirteen, and more if the infants under five were to be reckoned. If Stoke-Pero had no school, why should other parishes with as few children be obliged to keep up schools? How was it that neither the Vice President nor Her Majesty's School Inspectors had required a school to be provided for those children of three to eight years of age? A dame's school would be sufficient, but the pedantry of the Department required so many subjects to be taught which were not contemplated by the Act of 1870, that it debarred itself from asking for a school suitable to the small requirements of this hamlet. There was, however, another cause which might have operated to deprive Stoke-Pero of a school and to diminish the population, analogous to that erroneously attributed to William Rufus for the destruction of 30 villages. In this case Dunster, Minehead, and Porlock, and their districts were all interested in following the stag-hounds, and a great number of carriages attended the meet, so that it is an object to keep the country round Stoke-Pero quiet, and to avoid having a long distance to go on Exmoor. Going there the driver told him that he often saw red deer from the road. He had not that luck, though he saw, but did not go as far as, the field where the carriages assembled to see the meet. No doubt a very large number of people of all classes derived great enjoyment from being able to witness a stag-hunt so near home, and many might think it cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of a few farms and the displacement of a few people, but it was surprising to find a Radical of the die of the Vice President encouraging such a policy by his inaction. If it was said that this omission was due to Vice Presidents and Inspectors of former times, then the Vice President who had been so exacting in other cases was in the position of the wicked servant in the Gospel whose large debts had been remitted, but who yet exacted the whole of a smaller debt from his fellow servants. Some might be found to say that this neglect of the children of Stoke-Pero was owing to favouritism, and that the Vice President ought to have shown a Brutus-like disregard for parental or filial feelings. He regarded it otherwise, and hailed this proof that the Vice President respected the Fifth Commandment, and that he possessed some human feelings, and that he was not open to the taunt levelled by Dido at Æneas, that no goddess bore him but hard rocks, and that Hyrcanean tigresses suckled him; and upon this reference he must take this opportunity to request the Lord President to tender his apology to the Vice President for having compared him to a Bengal tiger. He did not wish, as he had already said, to press this deficiency, and had mentioned it only in order to convince the Vice President of the necessity of greater forbearance and indulgence on his own part, and of the necessity of reining in the School Inspectors and of getting rid of those who were old and wheezy, and who had certainly exaggerated ideas of ventilation. Whilst he was in this district he found the prevailing opinion of the Vice President to be that he was very zealous, but insufficiently acquainted with rural life, and that it was a misfortune for himself as well as for others that he did not represent the Admiralty or some other Public Office. Perhaps it was not too late for the Head of the Government to place him in some other Department before he could proceed further in ruining the voluntary schools by these structural exactions which were far greater than were demanded for the number of children in attendance in each district. It was necessary that the country should know what those demands were, and the only way to arrive at it was by a return of all the schools in which alterations had been required. He moved for that Return accordingly.

Moved—

"That there be laid before this House Return of all schools in which alterations have been required by the Education Department since the Vice President came into Office in 1892."—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, it would properly devolve upon my noble Friend Lord Playfair who has undertaken to reply for the Education Office in this House to answer the very discursive statement which has just been read out by the noble Lord at the Table, but that statement, or rather the question, on which it is founded seems to me to raise questions of a more general kind which appeal to me, as occupying the position of Leader of this House, and, I think, no less to all your Lordships who are Members of this House. There may be, and there are, no doubt, frequent criticisms levelled outside at various points in the character and composition of this House. But there is one accusation which, so far as I know, has never been levelled by any of your critics at this House, and it is that there is any want of those feelings of mutual gentlemanlike respect which ought to animate the various Members towards each other. And I will go a little further and say that whereas it is one of the prerogatives of the Opposition to say what they may think right of those who occupy the various posts in Her Majesty's Government, it has not yet been the function, so far as I know, of any Party or person in either House of Parliament to try to level stigmas at the permanent Civil Service of the country. I do not pretend to follow for one moment the noble Lord in the various points of his discourse, because he brought forward so much mythological and historical information, ranging as he did from Dido to William Rufus, and from William Rufus to the Hyrcanean or Bengal tiger, interspersed with various quotations from the New Testament. I think the main point we have to ask is why did the noble Lord select this estate in Devonshire for his searches in this controversy? We know perfectly well. We know that it was for this purpose of attempting to fix on the Education Department the great reproach of making one law for one part of the country and another law for another part in which the Vice President's father happens to own an estate. That was a grave imputation, and one which the noble Lord if he had been more thoughtful or better advised would not have made. The noble Lord has given his report, and we, too, have some report of the noble Lord's progress in that estate. We know that the noble Lord visited one of these schools, and, on seeing it, said, "This is too good for my purposes," and openly declared that his one object in making this rural trip was to raise a blush on the cheek of the Education Department. He has raised no such blush. The Education Department is quite prepared to abide even by the two instances which the noble Lord has chosen to read out, and I do make a solemn protest, both officially and as a private Member of this House, against the course which the noble Lord has thought fit to adopt on this occasion, of bringing aspersions against the permanent Civil Service of this country. My Lords, it is not an aspersion on my right hon. Friend the Vice President, because these are matters of Departmental duty. It would not come before him in any respect to decide whether the schools on his father's estate were in good repair or in bad. It comes before the officials of the Department; and if the officials of the Department, in the exercise of their heavy responsibility, think it right to weigh more lightly on the estates of a gentleman because he happens to be the aged father of the head of that Department, their responsibility is heavy indeed. Having said this much as regards the public aspect of the question, I will now say a word as to the two spots, hitherto unknown to me, on which the noble Lord has fixed his eagle eye. With regard to the school at Luccombe, the facts are these: The Inspectors, in answer to the Circular upon that point by the Education Department, have recognised two small defects, and have reported them to the Department in the usual way, as they have reported the defects which weigh so heavily on the noble Lord in respect of Macclesfield, and those defects will be remedied in the usual course. The defects on which the noble Lord has founded his statement are these: that whereas the room ought to be 12 ft. high it is only 11 ft. 9 in. high. That has apparently not hitherto been noticed, because up to the beginning of last year the Reports on voluntary schools, as is well known, were not so searching as they have since become; but I have pleasure in assuring the noble Lord that the defect has been reported to the Department and will be put right without unnecessary delay. The other defect, with regard to the approach to the offices, has also been reported, otherwise than by the noble Lord, and it, too, will be put right. The case of Stoke-Pero is a somewhat different one. There is no school at Stoke-Pero, because there are only 10 or 12 children of school age in the parish, and they attend schools two and a-quarter miles distant. The whole number of inhabitants is only 55. I will not follow the noble Lord into his researches of the time of William Rufus, and as to the necessity of keeping these two villages quiet for the sake of the deer, because I was not able to follow the arguments on which his remarks were founded; I have simply to deal with the facts, and the facts are as I have stated them. The Return for which the noble Lord asks would involve a large amount of labour and expense, but the Vice President has arranged to give a Return of schools whose grants have been lost or suspended through defective premises. This Return will run from the 1st of April, and will, it is hoped, to some extent carry out the object which the noble Lord has in view.

*Lord NORTON said, the noble Earl had stated that reflections had been made on the permanent officials of the Department, but it was the Head of the Department and not the permanent officials who had laid down Rules as to what were to be considered defects in schools. The defects mentioned by Lord Stanley were defined by the Department, and the complaint was that the Department should lay down Rules which were so stringent as to be fatal to a large number of voluntary schools throughout the Kingdom. That was a very serious charge against the Department, and had nothing to do with the duty of enforcing Rules by the permanent officials. The Return moved for by Lord Stanley would probably not be very voluminous. He knew cases where things prohibited by the Department a few years ago were now insisted upon by them in the same schools. Those were very embarrassing changes, for which the Council, and not the permanent officials, were to blame.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: The point raised by the noble Lord who has just spoken is totally different from that raised by the noble Lord at the Table. The question raised by the noble Lord is whether the Rules laid down are judicious or not, but the question raised by Lord Stanley of Alderley is whether they are impartially administered or not, which is a totally different thing.

*Earl FORTESCUE said, the Department varied its requirements very much. Some 30 odd years ago he built two schools, one in Devonshire and one in Lincolnshire. The plans were returned to him, because the Department considered they would necessitate so extravagant an outlay that no grant at all could be made if they were carried out. It was ancient history now, but he docked various things at some sacrifice of appearance and a great deal in convenience and comfort to the children, including a porch which would have sheltered them from the east wind. Additional requirements had been made since, some of which could have been done at the time much more economically, and he had had to add them. It was very unfortunate that the views of the Department should vary so much, and that they should put school managers to so much expense and inconvenience. However, he would not complain of additional requirements being made after an interval of 30 years, but he did complain when they came within two or three. That was rather intolerable. Nothwithstanding the Vice President's declaration that he was determined to give voluntary schools fair play, the impression was widely spread that requirements had been pressed without reasonable time being given at a period of great agricultural depression; and he would hardly persuade the public there was no animus against those schools either on his own part or on that of the permanent officials, who, they had just been told, had so much to do in determining the action of the Department.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I cannot entirely accept the Constitutional doctrine which as I gather was involved in the statement of the noble Earl the Prime Minister. In the first place, if I understood him rightly—but I may have been mistaken—I gathered from him that he seemed to disclaim responsibility for the Department of which he is the head, and that it was only for special reasons that he answered for the Department on this occasion. I will only call to his mind that the tenure of that office by the Prime Minister—an arrangement to which I have no sort of objection—is absolutely new, and it cannot be admitted that that fact enables the noble Earl to adopt a position with respect to criticisms on the Department which has never been taken up by any of his predecessors. I also demur to the language which the noble Earl held with regard to the permanent officials. I entirely agree with him it is not desirable that the action of the permanent officials should be adversely criticised in this or in the other House, for I think that such a practice would very much affect their independence, and would derogate from the efficiency of their offices. At the same time, it is necessary to remember that somebody must be responsible to Parliament, according to the theory of our Government, for everything done by the Government. Permanent officials are by no means infallible or impeccable. It is not desirable that we should attack them for what they have done or left undone in their offices. It is quite possible that there might be permanent Inspectors who are hostile to the voluntary schools, or who are hostile to the Board schools, and who show preference or bias in the administration of their office, but we trust to the political heads of the Department to check them in the exercise of that bias, and to see that they do not depart from the straight line. If they do depart from the straight line—if they do show favour or bias, or allow their own individual opinions to influence their actions, it is to the political heads of Departments we should go and say, "You ought to have seen that this did not take place." I therefore entirely demur to the position which seemed to me to be adopted by the noble Earl—that it was open to him as President of the Council to shelter himself, or to shelter his Department, from criticism of its action by saying that this was done by the permanent officials, and, therefore, that you have no right to call it in question. I claim that we have a right to call such matters in question, whether they affect the permanent officials or not, and to ask from the political heads of the Government—from the political guides and chiefs of those permanent officials for the reason or defence of the course they have taken.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Experience has taught me on no occasion in any haphazard manner to associate myself too closely with the utterances of the noble Marquess, and therefore he will excuse me if I do not accept in an unreserved manner every one of the propositions he has laid down. It might be true, and is true as far as I am aware, that within what you may call historical memory the Prime Minister has not held at the same time the Office of President of the Council. Nor can I recollect an instance in which the Office of Foreign Secretary has been associated with the Premiership except in the case of the late Government, when the two positions were filled by the noble Marquess.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: But I never on that account declined any responsibility for the Foreign Office.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: That is not the point. The noble Marquess said, it was unprecedented for two offices to be held by the Prime Minister, and I raised the objection on that ground.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The noble Earl has entirely misunderstood me. I objected that the noble Earl should dissociate himself from the acts of his Department, and of the Vice President.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: But then the noble Marquess entirely misunderstood me. I never had the slightest intention of dissociating myself from the Education Department over which I preside, nor of evading the just responsibility attached to it, but I do say that all matters of detail cannot come under the knowledge and attention of the President of the Council. While, however, I have no intention to lay down that the permanent officials of a Department should be always exempt from criticism, I must say that it is unprecedented in my experience that a noble Lord should come to this House and impugn the good faith of the permanent Civil servants of the Crown in administering departmentally the regulations laid down by their superiors; but as long as I am where I am, I shall always endeavour to the utmost of my power to stand up for the good faith and honour of the Civil servants of the Crown.

*THE EARL OF CRANBROOK: My Lords, I did not wish to intervene in this matter at all, but I must protest against the idea that the President of the Council is not the head of the Education Department. The noble Earl says that, as Prime Minister, he is only as responsible for the work of the Education Department as for other Departments under the Crown. But he is President of the Department, and responsible as such. The noble Earl the late Secretary for India, who accepted the responsibility, always answered for the Department of Education, and, I suppose, treated himself as its head, and I am not aware that the Vice President of the Committee of Council for Education is supreme in that Department. As far as I can speak for myself, everything of importance done in the Department was always submitted to me, and was not done without my approval and consent. That seems to me to be still the duty of the President of the Council, nor am I aware of any difference that exists in that matter whoever is President, or whoever represents the Department in this House. He is responsible for it, as is the case with regard to other Departments, though I quite admit it may be convenient to delegate the answer on questions of detail to some other noble Lord, in the special circumstances under which the office of President is now held. At the same time, he must at all times be ready when called upon to answer for the Department of which he is the head and for which he is responsible in this House.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): My Lords, I do not think what the noble Earl opposite has laid down differs from the position taken up by my noble Friend the Prime Minister. As I understand the position of the President of the Council, I do not think it is required of him that he should go into all questions of detail, though, of course, he administers the Department as fully as the head of any other Department. Of course, questions of detail of all kinds arise, but it is not necessary that they should be submitted to the President of the Council. When there were questions of considerable policy arising the Vice President, according to the established practice always consulted me upon them, and of course I was responsible with him for the determination come to. Exactly the same thing would be done by my noble Friend behind me. With regard to the particular schools referred to, another Member of your Lordships' House might have answered. That was always the practice, when I had the honour to hold the Office, but I am bound to say I had no personal knowledge of the details beyond getting from the Department on such occasions an account of what had taken place. It would be impossible for the Lord President and Vice President to go into all questions of detail. I think it is convenient that such questions should be answered by another noble Lord. In my opinion, it is much better that such an arrangement should be made. My noble Friend accepts all responsibility for what is done by the Education Department, and I do not think there is much difference between us on that point.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, he perceived that the Lord President had been primed by *The Birmingham Daily Post.*

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: The noble Lord is quite misinformed. I have not seen *The Birmingham Daily Post.*

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, then it was a happy coincidence. The noble Earl asked why he went to this place. He went because he had heard that the Vice President did not deal out the same measure there as in other places. It was not the fact that there were no children of school age in Stoke-Pero.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I never said there were no such children there.

On question, resolved in the negative.

BEHAR CADASTRAL SURVEY.

QUESTIONS. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether Sir Antony MacDonnell's proposals for the maintenance of the Record of Rights, in connection with the Behar Cadastral Survey, involved the creation of new European appointments in each district; whether the creation of these appointments was conceded by the Government of Bengal on the suggestion of the President of the European Behar Indigo Planters' Association, with the view of mitigating the opposition of that Association to the Cadastral Survey; whether the official members of the Bengal Legislative Council would be allowed to vote as they liked when these proposals came before that body; and whether the Secretary of State would take into his consideration the Memorials of those who would have to bear the cost of all these transactions, the zemindars and ryots of Behar, before sanctioning the introduction of the Bill? He said, he had not had an opportunity of putting the questions before, but, by reason of the difficulties of the Indian Treasury, he did not think it was too late, and he hoped the noble Lord would be able to answer them in a favourable sense.

*__Lord REAY__: No proposals have been received from India for the creation of such appointments as are described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of the noble Lord's question. With regard to his third question, when the Bill in question comes before the Legislature the attitude of the official members with regard to the measure will no doubt be the same as it is with regard to all other measures submitted to the Council. The Papers regarding the Behar Cadastral Survey, presented to Parliament in November last and distributed early in the present year, show that the Secretary of State in Council has carefully considered the Memorials which have reached him on the subject. I specially call the noble Lord's attention to Lord Kimberley's letter of December 14, 1893. The Secretary of State in Council will, with equal care, consider any further Memorials that may come.

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS BILL.—(No. 13.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell): My Lords, it may be in the recollection of some of your Lordships that in the discussions on the Employers' Liability Bill the question was raised whether the period within which actions must be brought is not in some cases too long, and I undertook to consider the matter. At the present time, in the case of some torts, the period of limitation is six years, and in the case of others it is four years and two years. Now, I cannot help thinking that the period of limitation is much longer than is desirable in the public interest. It is desirable, I think, that when a wrong has been sustained the party charged with liability in respect of it should receive notice of action without undue delay, because the longer the time that is allowed to elapse the greater, probably, may become the difficulties of defence. Witnesses, for example, may die in the interval, or cease to be in employment and change their places of residence, so that they cannot be found. The general period of limitation in the case of torts may, I think, well be reduced to one year, and that the Bill proposes to do. Where, however, a wrong has been committed, but is concealed by fraud and is not discovered, and could not with reasonable diligence have been discovered within the period of one year, the period of limitation will remain the same as now, provided that the action is commenced within one year from the time when it could with reasonable diligence have been discovered. The Bill also extends to actions of contract. At present the period of limitation for such actions is six years, and the proposal in the Bill is to reduce that period to three years except in cases of debts not exceeding £5. In those cases it is proposed that the period should be one year. This exception has been suggested by the Report of the Committee of your Lordships' House on the subject of commitments in County Courts for non-payment. I rather expect that the proposals in the Bill with regard to actions of contract will cause some little controversy, and if a very strong opposition should be shown to them I should be willing for the present to confine the Bill to the question of the limitation of time for actions of tort in the earlier part of the Bill. I trust your Lordships, after the explanation I have given, will see no difficulty in consenting to the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

VISCOUNT CROSS : This question, as the Lord Chancellor has stated, came before the Committee of your Lordships' House, over which I had the honour to preside, to consider the operation of the Debtors' Act. Evidence was brought before us showing the great hardship under which many poor people suffered by persons inducing them to buy goods in reliance upon a long period of credit being given, and then coming down upon the unfortunate purchasers under the provisions of the Debtors' Act. That question was not distinctly referred to us in the Reference, but it came so strongly before us that we thought it necessary to make a recommendation to the Lord Chancellor that, in our opinion, in the case of small debts it would be as beneficial to shopkeepers as to purchasers if the statutory period was materially reduced, leaving the extent of the reduction open to discussion, and I am glad, therefore, that the Lord Chancellor has now left it open for discussion in your Lordships' House.

LORD ASHBOURNE : My Lords, I have no objection to the Second Reading of this Bill. I have no doubt my noble Friend is quite right in his criticism with regard to reducing the period of limitation in cases of small debts of £5. I do not know whether it is intended to refer to a subject which was intended to be put into the Bill as to Crown claims, or whether my noble Friend will deal with that at some other stage.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) : So far as I am aware, in no draft that I have seen is there anything about the Crown, but I will give attention to the matter.

*LORD HALSBURY : I entirely approve of the Second Reading of the Bill, and I hope it will pass into law in the sense in which the Lord Chancellor intends it should do so. But I wish to call his attention to the language of it, because I think it may apply to a number of cases to which he has no intention it should apply, such as cases of trespass, and land in which title is involved, but which are torts, and, therefore, within the words of the Bill. That, I think, is not the intention, and I think language should be introduced to prevent its operation in such cases in respect to land, where it might be very mischievous.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY : As the noble Lord seems to think it may be necessary to modify the proposition with regard to small debts, I would suggest, if he goes on with it, whether he thinks it wise to maintain so low a limitation. My reason for urging it is this : that when a poor man is in debt, say to the amount of £4 10s., and tells the tradesman he cannot pay at the end of the third year, the tradesman would probably say, "You must really run into debt £2 more." It would rather have the effect of increasing debt than of diminishing it. I would recommend that to the attention of the Lord Chancellor.

Motion agreed to ; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the whole House.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS—BETTERMENT.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of MORLEY) moved to resolve—

> "That it is desirable that a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report whether, in the case of improvements sanctioned by Parliament and effected by the expenditure of public funds, persons, the value of whose property is clearly increased by an improvement, can be equitably required to contribute to the costs of the improvements ; and, if so, in what cases and under what conditions Parliament should sanction the levying of such contributions in Local Acts or Provisional Orders."

He showed that the position in which the House was placed with regard to what was called the "betterment" question rendered some action necessary, and the sooner action was taken in the matter the better. The House would remember that in July last a Resolution was moved and carried by Lord Onslow to the effect that the principle of betterment, assessing capital values instead of annual values, ought not to be embodied in a Private Bill. After that Resolution was carried, the Bill to which it specifically referred came before a Select Committee, who had no other course open to them but to strike out the "Betterment Clause." This year several Bills embodying the principle would come before the House, and he thought it was necessary that the Committees to which they were referred should be instructed as to their action upon them. At present he presumed Lord Onslow's Resolution would stand good. In November last he suggested a Joint Committee of the two Houses, but, unfortunately, the other House returned no answer to the Message sent to them; and, therefore, this House was thrown upon its own resources. It was desirable that this question should be settled as early as possible, as the Bill to which he had referred would soon be coming on. He therefore urged the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the question generally, and especially the general principle on which any such system of contribution from increased values was to be levied, if levied at all. He would only add that he had adhered on this occasion to the precise words of the Motion of last November.

Moved—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report, whether, in the case of improvements sanctioned by Parliament and effected by the expenditure of public funds, persons, the value of whose property is clearly increased by an improvement, can be equitably required to contribute to the costs of the improvements; and, if so, in what cases and under what conditions Parliament should sanction the levying of such contributions in Local Acts or Provisional Orders."—(*The Chairman of Committees.*)

*THE EARL OF **ONSLOW** said, it was very desirable and was indeed expected by all interested in the question that the House should give an opinion as to the manner in which this question should be dealt with. Inasmuch as the question was quite novel to Parliament, he thought it would be wise to satisfy themselves not only of the manner in which the principle should be applied, but also as to whether it should be applied at all. He hoped their Lordships would agree to the Motion.

THE EARL OF **ROSEBERY**: My Lords, so far as the Government are concerned, they have no objection to the Motion, except that they express the hope that the appointment of this Committee will not act as a bar to the consideration in the usual course by a Committee of any Bill coming up from the House of Commons which may include the "betterment" clauses, as they are called, whether they come from London or Manchester.

Motion agreed to.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.—(No. 15.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.

Verbal Amendments.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3.

THE EARL OF **KIMBERLEY** moved an Amendment in order that any powers which we might give to the United States cruisers should be precisely the same as those given to our cruisers, and no more.

Amendment moved, in page 3, line 8, after ("thereof") insert—

("Or such of those powers as appear to Her Majesty in Council to be exerciseable under the law of the United States of America against ships of the United States.")—(*The Earl of Kimberley.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4.

Formal Amendment.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7.

Verbal and drafting Amendments.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received To-morrow; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered in order to its being dispensed with; and Bill to be printed, as amended. (No. 22.)

TRUSTEE ACT, 1893, AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 20.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD **ASHBOURNE**: My Lords, this is a Bill to remedy an Irish grievance—a real Irish grievance. It comes before your Lordships under the novel condition that it is supported by all classes and conditions of Irish Members, and is certainly opposed by none. The point involved is this. Under the Trustee Act powers were given to the High Court in England to make Orders in any part of Her Majesty's dominions except Scotland. Inconvenience has been found to arise from a similar provision not having been made with regard to Ireland, and this Bill is to remedy the defect.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Ashbourne.*)

Lord MONKSWELL: My Lords, on behalf of the Irish Office, I have only to say that they find themselves entirely in accord with the Bill of the noble and learned Lord.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

MARKING OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Lord RIBBLESDALE moved—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report whether legislation for the purpose of requiring the foreign or colonial origin of imported agricultural and horticultural produce—and especially meat, cheese, and fruit—to be marked thereon or otherwise indicated, is necessary, expedient, and feasible; and, if so, what are the provisions which such legislation should comprise; and that the Lords following be named of the Committee:—

E. Winchilsea and Nottingham
E. Stanhope
E. Onslow
L. Carrington (*L. Chamberlain*)
L. Vernon
L. Ribblesdale
L. Wigan (*E. Crawford*)
L. Belper
L. Lawrence
L. Wimborne
L. Rothschild
L. Monkswell
L. Mount Stephen

He said, this was the same Committee as was appointed on the 9th May last year and reported upon that part of their Reference relating to meat on the 19th of July. It was now proposed to go on with the cheese and fruit. He begged to move that the Committee be appointed.

Lord TEYNHAM said that, coming from a part of the country where fruit cultivation formed the chief industry, he had no intention of opposing the Motion. Only last week a Bill was brought forward in the House of Commons to provide for the marking of foreign fruit, but the President of the Board of Trade endeavoured to cover the Bill with ridicule, and made a number of jests which convulsed the Irish Nationalists and London Radicals with laughter, but were not appreciated by agriculturists. The result was that the Bill was thrown out. Only five days after, the Government proposed this Committee. The Government would have given more evidence of earnestness if they had accepted the Bill of last week and referred it to a Select Committee. No doubt they would consent to continued inquiry by this Committee, whose labours might facilitate legislation when this Government was dead and gone.

*The Earl of ONSLOW, on the Motion of Lord Ribblesdale, called attention to the first Report of the Committee, and inquired whether Her Majesty's Government proposed to take any steps, and, if so, what, to put a stop to the widespread misrepresentation shown, by the evidence given before the Committee, to exist as to the country of origin of meat sold in Great Britain, whereby the consumer, while paying for the highest-priced article, obtained one of lower market value, and had no security against the existence of disease? He need not apologise for calling attention to this subject, because it affected not one class only, but the whole population of the Kingdom. Of the whole food supply of this country one-third came from abroad, and was of the total value of £22,000,000; and in 25 years the amount of dead meat imported had exceeded by three times the amount of live stock. Three-fifths of the meat eaten in the Army was imported, and the prices varied considerably. The prices for the last week of last month, roughly speaking, showed a difference of 1s. a stone in the prices of the several kinds of meat. Last year he introduced a Bill intended to provide for the identification of different kinds of meat, but it did not meet with favour from the Government, though the Government assented to inquiry by the Committee, the re-appointment of which was now moved. It had terminated its inquiry into the importation of meat, and it proposed to continue its inquiry into the importation of other food stuffs.

There existed in the meat trade widespread misrepresentation as to the place of origin. He was glad to find that, although the Report spoke in no measured terms of the frauds and misrepresentations that were practised, the Report had been accepted by the butcher's interest as a fair statement of the facts. An enormous number of cases of misrepresentation were adduced. A leading West End butcher, doing a large business at several shops, was shown to have had only six Scotch sides of beef in any of his shops for two years, during which period he professed to be selling nothing else but Scotch meat. Others, professing to sell only Welsh mutton, supplied nothing but New Zealand mutton. In many parts of England there were professed agencies of Sussex farmers and Essex farmers that dealt exclusively in American and Australian meat. In Birkenhead it was the custom to dress oxen imported from America in the Scotch fashion, and to sell the carcases in London to unsophisticated Londoners as coming from Aberdeen. A gentleman who had bought a leg of mutton as the best Scotch found inside the bone a piece of paper, on which was written—"Where did you buy this leg? Please inform" so-and-so, of Canterbury, New Zealand. Instances had been given in which householders had asked to be supplied with imported meat on condition that the fact should be concealed from the servants, lest they should give notice to leave. There was no doubt misrepresentation with reference to ham, lard, and other produce as well as butcher's meat, and that foreign imports were sold as "best Waterford," "best Belfast," or "best Wilts." The Board of Trade had power to prosecute those who sold food products under false names; but the power appeared to have been so sparingly exercised as to suggest that the instructions had been somewhat in the nature of those given by Talleyrand to his subordinates, *Surtout messieurs pas de zèle.* The Committee recommended that the power of prosecution should be extended to the Board of Agriculture, in whom those interested would place more confidence. There was no sufficient assurance that unhealthy animals were not slaughtered abroad. Many processes of marking meat had been suggested, but the Committee did not feel justified in recommending the adoption of any one of them; but they believed it would be useful to compel importers of and dealers in imported meat to register themselves under that description. People would then obtain foreign meat at 6d. and 8d. per lb. instead of 1s. Inspectors under the Food and Drugs Act said that with a slight increase of staff it would be practicable to prevent imposition. Every young officer who left Sandhurst was instructed how to distinguish frozen meat from fresh meat; and there was no difficulty in teaching anyone to do it. This would be protection, not for the home grower, but for the consumer. These measures would not affect the price of the best English meat, but they might lower the prices of inferior English meat and bring them below the prices of the best imported meat. Parliament had already accepted the principle that the consumer was entitled to be protected from fraud, as in the case of the Margarine and other Acts. His contention was not that they should deprive any person of opportunities for purchasing imported meat or compel him to purchase British meat, but that if the consumer desired to have imported meat he should get it at the proper price, or, if English meat (and he was prepared to pay the price for it), he should not have imported meat foisted upon him. In that way the English farmer would obtain the highest price for his products, and the Colonial importer would have an opportunity of submitting their meat to the test of public opinion under its proper name, and further, it would not be an unworthy object to free the whole community from the demoralisation of widespread fraudulent dealings in meat.

*LORD **PLAYFAIR** congratulated the noble Lord upon his speech on the present occasion, which carried out the moderate spirit of the Report of the Committee over which he presided. In that Report it was pointed out that there were few, if any, fraudulent misrepresentations in the wholesale trade, and that they principally took place in the retail trade of the country. They were frequently gross and fraudulent. The Government would be exceedingly glad to see the Merchandise

Marks Act applied to fraudulent misrepresentation in regard to the sale of meat as it did in regard to the sale of manufactured commodities. Local Authorities could do much more than the Board of Trade, having their Inspectors under the Food and Drugs Act. If Local Authorities would furnish the Board of Trade with clear evidence, that Department would take measures to find out whether the Merchandise Marks Act was as efficient in regard to meat as it was in regard to manufactured commodities. The Board of Trade itself had great difficulty in getting cases likely to lead to conviction, because they had no Inspectors for the purpose. The Local Authorities, therefore, might very well prosecute cases of wilful misrepresentation, though he admitted there might be some legal difficulty in the way of the Local Authority applying local funds for such a purpose. The Board of Agriculture was interested even more than the Board of Trade in this subject, and the Government were quite willing that a Bill should be introduced giving powers to the former Board as well as to the latter to deal with the mischief. The whole question of marking, he pointed out, however, required serious consideration. It had been found from experience that a mark of origin increased the demand for certain foreign goods, it being supposed that they were as good as British goods, while they were certainly cheaper. Marking, therefore, might possibly give a gigantic advertisement in favour of foreign production. However that might be, the Government were willing to adopt the recommendation of the Committee by giving to the Board of Agriculture powers to prosecute in cases of wilful misrepresentation.

The Earl of ONSLOW said, this was certainly the most promising utterance which had yet proceeded from the Government on this subject, and the statements made by the noble Lord would be very welcome to those who had the matter at heart. He begged to ask whether the noble Lord was to be understood as giving an assurance that a Bill would be introduced?

Lord PLAYFAIR: I have no doubt of it, though I have not had an opportunity of ascertaining by which Department it will be introduced.

Motion agreed to.

The Committee to appoint their own Chairman.

QUARTER SESSIONS (MIDSUMMER) BILL [H.L.].—(No. 4.)

now

QUARTER SESSIONS BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to Order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES COMMITTEE.

The Lord Privy Seal added to the Select Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 2) BILL.

Brought from the Commons: read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 23.)

House adjourned at a quarter-past Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter-past Ten o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 16th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the cost of publishing *The Board of Trade Journal* and *The Labour Gazette*, what is the circulation of each, and how much of the expense is recovered from advertisers, and how much from sales?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): I cannot give the details for which the hon. Member asks, but I understand that there is no loss to the State on the two periodicals in question. The Board of Trade have nothing to do with the publication and sale of *The Labour Gazette*, which is entirely in the hands of the contractors.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Then is no information whatever obtainable? I will move for it.

THE CANADIAN TEA DUTIES.

Mr. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state what the intentions of the Canadian Government are with reference to the alteration of the Tea Duties; whether teas blended in bond in Great Britain will be subject to any and what duty in the new tariff; and whether the Canadian Government can legally differentiate against this country and home labour in favour of China and other tea-exporting countries?

Sir R. HANSON (London) had also the following question on the same subject: To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state if, under the new Canadian Tariff, teas in their original packages and not blended with other teas are to be subject to a tax; and whether Her Majesty's Government will use its influence with the Canadian Government to admit duty free from Great Britain all teas passed as pure for home consumption by Her Majesty's Customs, and for which certificates of origin can be granted by Her Majesty's Customs, which certificates could also state that the said teas had been passed for home consumption, and not for exportation only, thus protecting Canada from impure teas from the English market?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. S. Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): We have received a telegraphic communication from the Governor General to the effect that he is in communication with his Ministers on the subject, and that an answer will be given by the Privy Council of Canada this week. Under these circumstances, I would ask my hon. Friends to postpone their questions until Thursday next.

IRISH REGISTRY OF DEEDS.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, considering that a special statutory responsibility attaches to the officials of the Irish Registry of Deeds, under the Act 2 & 3 Will. IV., c. 87, and a Royal Commission reported in 1882 as to the value and importance of the functions of the Department and the high-class nature of its duties, he will consider the claims of that Office to consideration; whether he is aware that some members of the junior class of the old establishment have 28 and 30 years' service, have been for several years without increase of pay, and are without any present prospect of promotion; whether such a condition is unique in Public Departments; and whether, if the first and second classes can be amalgamated at a trifling cost, as was done with the second and third classes in 1886, he will consider the expediency of effecting a removal of their grievance by this means?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham): The statutory provision quoted was considered in 1865 by a Committee, which reported that it was a dead letter. No action has been taken under it. The present junior class was created in 1886 by allowing the third class to rise to the maximum of the second. Those at the head of the class have thus, in effect, been promoted from the third to the second class, in which none have been more than 10 years. The Royal Commission referred to recommended that the first class should continue as at present both in numbers and salaries. I cannot, therefore, hold out any prospect of increasing it by allowing those now in the second class to rise to the maximum of the first class.

Mr. CLANCY: In consequence of the unsatisfactory nature of the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman, I shall raise this question on the Estimates.

IRISH INLAND REVENUE EXAMINATION.

Mr. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that great dissatisfaction exists among the members of the Inland Revenue Department in Ireland at the result of the examination held last December for the rank of expectant supervisor, in which only one candidate out of more than 20 succeeded from all Ireland on that occasion; whether he is aware that none of the examiners were Irish; that the names and nationalities of the candidates were affixed to each set of papers; and that the examiners refused to publish the marks given to each candidate; and whether, if at all previous examinations the papers were finally revised by the Secretary and

Chief Inspector, and were not so revised on this occasion, such a revision would be ordered even now?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I am not aware that any such dissatisfaction exists as is referred to in the first paragraph of the question. As a matter of fact, of the 20 successful candidates, six or seven are believed to be Irishmen by birth, although none of them happen to be at present serving in Ireland. Candidates are not required to indicate their nationality on their papers; nor did they do so in this instance. The usual Regulations were observed with regard to the examination in question, and no revision of the result will be made by the Board of Inland Revenue, who are satisfied that the examination was conducted with the utmost impartiality.

REGISTRY OF TITLES, DUBLIN.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the post of Chief Clerk to the Registry of Titles, Dublin, will shortly be filled; and, if so, whether he will consider the claims of members of the Registry of Deeds under Section 6 of "The Registration of Title Act, 1891"?

***Sir J. T. HIBBERT**: I am informed that there is no such office as Chief Clerk in the Registry of Titles, either now existing or in contemplation. With the exception of offices already filled the staff consists of persons temporarily employed and paid by the Registrar out of a lump sum allowed to him annually for the purpose. It rests with the Lord Chancellor, with the concurrence of the Treasury, to exercise the power of appointment suggested in the question. The Treasury would, of course, have every desire to concur in any nomination made by his Lordship.

ENFIELD ROYAL SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

Captain BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of hands working less than 45 hours a week during the last week at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield; and how long this slackness of work is likely to continue?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Woodall, Hanley): At Enfield Factory last week 439 men worked less than 45 hours each, but, as was stated on Thursday, other work will, from this week forward, be found for the men.

DECREASING CRIME IN IRELAND.

Mr. THOMAS HEALY: (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that at the Wexford Spring Assizes of 1894 there was only one trifling criminal case for trial, that at the Hilary Quarter Sessions of this year the County Court Judge was presented with white gloves in both divisions of the county, and that at the last Winter Assizes there was no criminal case from the county; and whether, seeing this crimeless condition of the county, he will give instruction for the withdrawal of the 18 extra police now stationed there?

***The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND** (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am aware of the gratifying facts mentioned in the question of the hon. Member. With regard to the other point raised in the question, I am informed that 18 men as an extra force are employed on special protection duty, and that their services at present cannot be dispensed with. The cost to the county entailed by the employment of this extra force is about £600 per annum.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): May I inquire whether the general state of Ireland, as evidenced by the Judges' Charges at the recent Assizes, is not such as to warrant the reduction of the extra police force all over Ireland?

Mr. J. MORLEY: My hon. and learned Friend will see when the Estimates are submitted that it is proposed to make a very substantial reduction in the number of Constabulary. The special charge in the present case is owing to the peculiar circumstances of one particular property in Wexford County.

PRESS ACCOMMODATION IN THE DUBLIN LAW COURTS.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the accommodation for reporters engaged in the Dublin Law Courts is of the most unsatisfactory character, and has been made the subject of repeated protests by the Irish Journalists' Association, and that these complaints have been endorsed by the Lord Chief Justice and by the members of the legal profession generally; and whether he can see his way to accepting an Amendment of the Law Library (Ireland) Bill which would involve the provision of better accommodation for the Press among the improvements to which the sum of £15,000 therein provided is to be devoted, or whether in any other shape instructions can be conveyed to the Board of Works to bear this subject in mind in any contemplated alterations in the Law Courts?

*Mr. J. MORLEY: I have not been able to obtain a detailed Report of the matters stated in the first paragraph of the question, but I have no reason to doubt that my hon. Friend is accurately informed. It would not, in my opinion, be competent to amend the Library Bill as suggested, inasmuch as it proposes in its title to deal only with the library, and I am informed that the sum of £15,000 will be only sufficient for that purpose. I will request the Board of Works to bear this subject in mind in reference to any contemplated alterations in the Courts.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): Has not the difficulty in this case been largely intensified by the fact that students for the Bar are required, as a part of their preparation for examination, to attend and report cases at the Courts, and that they have monopolised the seats hitherto used by the Press?

Sir A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Do the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman in his answer apply equally to the buildings of the Incorporated Law Society? Will he take that matter into consideration?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The case of the Incorporated Law Society is a different one. In reply to the Member for Roscommon, I can only say I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details of legal training to be able to confirm his statement or otherwise.

Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): Is it not a fact that the Lord Justice of the Queen's Bench has already made accommodation for the Press in the Queen's Bench Division?

*Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that that is the case.

Mr. W. O'Brien

THE BEHRING SEA QUESTION.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can now state the date of the notification said to have been published in British Columbia warning sealers that Behring Sea will be closed this year; whether he will state the terms of the notification; and whether, in the precedent of the *modus vivendi*, compensation was awarded to sealers that had left port before any notification was published of an impending prohibition, and what was the amount paid in compensation?

Mr. S. BUXTON: No notification has been published that Behring Sea will be closed this year, for, as the hon. Member is aware, it will at certain seasons be open to sealing under the restrictions prescribed by the Award of the Arbitration Tribunal. The terms of that Award, including the Regulations, were published in the Press in British Columbia so long ago as August last, and the obligation of Her Majesty's Government to enforce a close time from May 1 to July 31 was, therefore, well known. The present circumstances are widely different from those connected with the *modus vivendi* of 1891, in connection with which compensation was granted to the amount of £20,000.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government have received a Resolution of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia relative to the Behring Sea Award Act and the question of compensation to sealers; and, if so, whether he can communicate the terms of that Resolution to this House?

Mr. S. BUXTON: We have been informed by the Governor General of the purport of the Resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. It is to the following effect: that the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia hope that the Royal Assent will be withheld (to the Bill now before Parliament) until following claims are acknowledged by United States Government: compensation to British Columbia for vessels seized, and for exclusion during 1891-2-3 from Behring Sea.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICIALS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why the details of the Estimate are not supplied in the Vote for the Salaries of the Officials of the House of Lords; whether they will, as usual, be supplied before that Vote is taken; how, in the absence of details, the total has been arrived at; and whether any arrangement has yet been agreed upon as to giving effect to the decision of this House upon this Vote last Session?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The total of the Estimate for 1894-5 is the same as the reduced sum voted last year, and the details making up the total were omitted, as no agreement with regard to those details had been arrived at when the Estimates were presented.

IRISH EDUCATION ACT, 1892.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in introducing a Bill to amend the Irish Education Act of 1892, he will consider the advisability of making provision for defraying a portion of the expense of putting the compulsory clauses into effect, if not from the Imperial Exchequer, from some such source as the Suitors' Fund or the unusable surplus of the Intermediate Education Grant?

MR. J. MORLEY: In reply to this question, I have to say that the Government do not propose to ask Parliament to amend this Act in the direction indicated by the hon. Gentleman.

LORD DILLON'S TENANTS.

MR. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what amount of rent was due by Lord Dillon's tenants in Loughglynn when proceedings were taken against them; how many persons were evicted, including those reinstated as caretakers; what was the amount of rent due by those who were evicted without being reinstated when proceedings were instituted against them; and whether he will consider the desirability of making provision at an early day to prevent such proceedings in future?

MR. J. MORLEY: In reply to paragraphs 1 and 3, no rent appears to have been due by the tenants referred to. The evictions were not for non-payment of rent, but were for overholding possession after the expiration of the leases under which the holdings had originally been let. With regard to the second paragraph, 25 tenants and sub-tenants were evicted, including those reinstated as caretakers. With regard to the last paragraph, the hon. Gentleman is doubtless aware that in the execution of the decrees against these tenants the Executive had no alternative but to afford the protection of the police, and that in the present state of the law the Government is absolutely powerless to prevent the service of notices to quit and subsequent evictions.

INDIAN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT CONTRACTS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if the wires, cables, and other apparatus required by the Indian Telegraph Department and other branches of the India Office are bought by asking for tenders from all the respectable British and Irish firms capable of supplying such material, or if the competition is restricted to specially favoured houses; and, in such latter case, if he will consider if some change in the system may be desirable in the public interest, and to avoid all suspicion of official favouritism?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): Competition for the supply of telegraph material is not restricted to specially favoured houses. Any British or Irish firm that can satisfy the Department of its ability to supply goods of the quality required will be placed on the India Office List of Contractors, and will be invited to tender as opportunity offers. Experience has shown that it is not advisable to purchase stores of this description by public advertisement.

STAMPING OF IRISH DEEDS.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if there is any Act of Parliament which makes it obligatory to have counterparts of deeds in Ireland stamped in the presence of the Board of Inland Revenue's Solicitor for Ireland; whether they could be legally stamped as deeds now are, in the office at Belfast; and whether, considering the loss of time and inconvenience of having to send the counterparts to be stamped with the counterpart die in Dublin at present, he will provide facilities at the Belfast office for stamping the counterparts also there?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The stamping of counterparts of deeds in Ireland is regulated by Sections 11 and 72 of the Stamp Act, 1891. To carry out the requirements of those sections, with due protection to the Revenue, the examination of the original and counterpart deeds must be made in the office of the solicitor to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue in Dublin. I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot see my way to give facilities at the Belfast office for stamping the counterparts also there.

WAR OFFICE PREPARATIONS AGAINST INVASION.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the plans understood to be in readiness for the complete mobilisation of Her Majesty's Forces for the defence of Great Britain from invasion have ever been practically tested in any of the military districts; and, in the contrary case, if he will consider the expediency of ascertaining their efficacy by a distinct experiment, so far as can be legally done in the absence of imminent national danger, either at Portsmouth or some other point likely to be attacked?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): There has been no full practical test of the system of mobilisation in any district, and such a test would hardly justify its cost if attempted without the legal powers which can only be used in case of emergency. But there is no reason to believe that with those powers the scheme, which has been carefully worked out, is not perfectly practicable and efficient.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): Arising out of that answer, may I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will consider the advisability of ordering during the present year an experimental mobilisation of the equipment and store depôts of the First Army Corps at Aldershot, Warley, or Colchester; and whether he will also consider the possibility of mobilising during the present year one or more of the Army Medical Staff Corps Bearer Companies attached to the First Army Corps?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: If my hon. Friend will call attention to this matter in another way, or will give notice of the question, I shall be glad to consider the question.

RAINEY'S SCHOOL, MAGHERAFELT.

SIR T. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, under the scheme of the Commissioners of Educational Endowments in Ireland, the present Governors of Rainey's School, Magherafelt, have received an account of the former managers under audit of the Local Government Board; that in this account of the Salters' Company an amount of £154. the annual charge on property in County Down, has been disputed by the present Governors, and if the Report of the auditors of the Local Government is chiefly in favour of the position taken up by the present Governors; whether the accounts of the Archbishop of Armagh have been submitted to the present Governors; whether he is aware that the Salters' Company received a sum of £154 after their accounts with Rainey's Schools had been closed, and that the Governors claim this sum, but from poverty or other reasons cannot take legal proceedings to obtain it; whether these accounts can be subjected to further scrutiny, and steps taken to protect the charity from serious loss; and whether a Memorial has been received from the School Governors asking the assistance of the Local Government Board in this matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board are informed by their auditor, who audited the accounts of this school, that a sum of £150 in the accounts of the Salters' Company has been disputed by the Governors of the school and that he decided in favour of the Salters' Company, and not of the Governors. The accounts of the Archbishop of Armagh are embraced in the final account of the representative Church Body, and were submitted to the Governors in the final account of that body. A Memorial has been received by the Local Government Board as stated in the concluding paragraph, and that Department has replied that the only duty devolving upon it under the scheme was that of appointing an auditor for the audit of the accounts to which the scheme applies, and that it had no power to interfere further with the auditor as requested in the Memorial. So far as the Board is aware, there is no appeal to it from decisions of the auditor appointed under the Educational Endowments Act.

EXPENDITURE AT HOME NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: On behalf of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the annual Navy Expense Accounts for the Naval Establishments at home could in future be furnished to the House separately from those of the foreign yards, either before or at the time that the annual Estimates are presented to Parliament?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY - SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The present system is fixed by the Audit Act of 1889. We will communicate with the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Treasury (as the date of publication of the Navy Expense Accounts rests with those authorities, and not with the Admiralty) in order that the question may be considered whether these accounts could be produced somewhat sooner than heretofore.

MERCHANT SEAMEN.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: On behalf of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will include, in the Reference to the proposed Committee on the Manning of Merchant Ships, an inquiry into the supply and present means of training merchant seamen?

MR. MUNDELLA: The question of undermanning by itself is a large one, and if the Reference were extended, as suggested, the Committee would not be able to report within a reasonable time.

ARRAN ISLANDS.

MR. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the relieving officer in Arran Islands is the bailiff on the property where the recent evictions were carried out; whether any special provisions were made by that official for the shelter of the families evicted; whether this official was the officer from whom the Local Government Board Inspector chiefly got information as to the condition of the islanders; and whether it is in accordance with the Rules enforced by the Local Government Board that a Poor Law officer should hold such a position as estate bailiff within the district where he has to discharge his public duties?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that the relieving officer in question was elected to that office by the Guardians in February last, but that his appointment as bailiff is of subsequent date. I understand that the relieving officer offered to provide lodgings for the evicted tenants, but that this offer was not accepted. The Local Government Board Inspector states that he received no information whatever from this officer as to the resources of the people upon which he founded any Report to the Board. There is no provision in the Board's Regulations to the effect mentioned in the concluding paragraph of the question. I may add, however, that the present relieving officer is only acting temporarily, and that the permanent appointment will be made by the Guardians on the 25th instant.

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the general destitution in these islands has during the last 12 months got beyond a point at which it is in the power of the Poor Law Authorities to cope with it except by taking the people into the workhouses, and will he consider the possibility of enabling the people to seed their holdings by undertaking some necessary works, such as roads, &c.?

MR. J. MORLEY: My hon. Friend may rest assured that the state of the islands has been, and is still, receiving my careful attention. I cannot add anything to that.

WORKING HOURS IN PUBLIC OFFICES.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, when by Order in Council of August, 1890, the seven-hour day was introduced into Government Offices in which a daily attendance of six hours only was previously required, any opportunity of retirement on pension was afforded to Civil servants whose original terms of employment were so varied, and who might object to the extra daily attendance thus required; whether pensions on equitable terms will now be granted to those who wish to retire; whether the Treasury will communicate with Heads of Departments in order to ascertain what terms might be proposed, having in view Departmental reorganisation and the reduction of expenditure; whether terms of retirement on the abolition of office scale will be given in cases where the adoption of such a scale will not put an increased burden on the taxpayer; and whether, if no such opportunities of retirement be afforded, Civil servants will be permitted to continue their employment in accordance with the previous Regulations as to daily attendance and the Saturday half-holiday?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I think my hon. Friend may not be aware that I answered a similar question on the 13th of February last, and perhaps he will allow me to hand him a copy of the answer then given.

THE CASE OF ELLEN CONWAY.

Mr. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds and for what reasons did the Chief Clerk of the Thames Police Court attend a conference on the evening of Friday, the 6th instant, at the chambers of the counsel appearing for Messrs. Bell, match makers, Bromley, who are prosecuting Ellen Conway for alleged intimidation; and why was he present and in consultation with the solicitors for Messrs. Bell at the Sessions on Saturday, the 7th instant, when the case of Ellen Conway was down for appeal? I should also like to ask whether the Chief Clerk referred to in the question stopped Mr. W. J. Derby, one of the girl's sureties, in Fenchurch Street Station, and endeavoured to induce him to withdraw his bail, and told him that he would certainly forfeit his £40 and would be branded as an associate of criminals?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): I understand that the case of Ellen Conway is not pending as a prosecution by Messrs. Bell, but by way of appeal against the decision of the Magistrate at the Thames Police Court. I am informed that the Chief Clerk attended a consultation with the counsel appearing for the Magistrate on the appeal, and that he also attended at the Sessions on the appeal day on behalf of the Magistrate whose conviction was appealed against. In so attending the Chief Clerk was acting with the consent and at the request of the Magistrate. With regard to that part of the question of which my hon. Friend has given me private notice, I am informed by the Chief Clerk that he did not stop Mr. Derby at Fenchurch Street, and did not endeavour to induce him to withdraw his bail; nor did he tell him that he would forfeit his £40, and be branded as an associate of criminals. The Chief Clerk states that he was stopped by Mr. Derby, who asked about his liability, and received the usual reply in such cases—namely, that in the event of the conviction being upheld, Mr. Derby would be liable on his recognisances to pay the costs of the appeal.

Mr. MACDONALD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, a few days after Ellen Conway was liberated on bail.

Mr. ASQUITH said, he had no information to that effect.

Mr. MACDONALD: Will the right hon. Gentleman consent to hear from Mr. Derby his version of what took place at the interview?

Mr. ASQUITH said, that any information forwarded to him would be considered.

THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will make any further statement to the House as to the position of affairs in the Colony of Newfoundland?

Mr. S. BUXTON: We have received from the Governor of Newfoundland copies of an address by the Assembly contesting the legality of the judgment of the Judge, together with a Resolution of the Assembly and of the Legislative Council, which makes a similar protest, which expresses the opinion that the minority of the House should not be entrusted with the collection of taxes, and which rescinds the Resolution previously passed for granting Supply. The Governor also informs us that he intends to prorogue the House for a week.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I am sure, Sir, that I shall not ask in vain for the patience and indulgence of the Committee. I stand in great need of both, for the Committee are aware that the task imposed upon me to-day is one of no ordinary difficulty. My first duty is to state to the Committee the financial condition of the country during the year which has just concluded. The Committee are well acquainted with the adverse circumstances which beset that year. The rise in commercial and general prosperity which, beginning in 1886, culminated in 1890, has been followed by a gradual fall, accelerated in its velocity, till we may hope that it reached its nadir in 1893. That unfortunate year has laboured under accumulated misfortune—the financial difficulties in America, financial embarrassments in Australia, the disturbance of trade in India, the labour disputes at home, the general depression of agriculture, aggravated by the special circumstances of the drought, affecting crops in the South of England; each and all of these might in themselves have been causes which would adversely have affected the Revenue, but which, in their combined effect, might have been expected to produce the most unhappy of consequences and a collapse of the public finance, such as that which we have witnessed in several foreign States in the present year. England, from her universal trade, is more susceptible than any other State to external disturbances of this character. In spite of these adverse circumstances, the Committee are already aware that the condition of the public balance-sheet is by no means so deplorable as a few months ago most people anticipated and believed. On the contrary, taking into account the whole situation, that balance-sheet will show, I think, in a striking manner, the soundness of your finance and the unbroken solidity of the resources of the nation. The first six months of the year were apparently disastrous; but the law of average has prevailed, and the second half has redressed the balance, as the summer drought has been succeeded by the winter rains. My first business is to lay before you the yield of the Revenue in the year just concluded, as compared with the Budget Estimate and with the yield of the preceding year. In doing this, I am afraid I shall trespass much on the patience of the Committee, although I will endeavour to do so as little as possible. The first head is that of Customs. The Budget Estimate was £19,650,000. The amount paid into the Exchequer in the year 1893-94 was £19,707,000, or exceeding the Estimate by £57,000. I venture to think that this is a pretty close and satisfactory calculation. What is more material to observe in all these cases is the net receipt, which is the true comparison of the yield of Revenue belonging to the several years. The net receipt on the Customs had been, for 1893-94, £19,712,000, as compared with £19,619,000 for the year 1892-93—that is, yielding an increase in 1893-94 of £93,000. Under the circumstances, I think I may say that is an astonishing figure. The principal items which deserve observation are—first, foreign spirits. In these there is an excess of £39,000 on the whole; a large diminution on rum; but still larger increase on other spirits. Rum seems to be a very fluctuating quantity. The consumption of it prevailed largely in former years. Next, as to tea. Here there has been an excess of £101,000 over the receipt in the preceding year, and an increase of 6,000,000 lb., or 3 per cent. on the whole consumption. Coffee, including cocoa, shows a decrease of £15,000. Coffee is always a diminishing quantity, even with increase of population. Tobacco shows an increase of £2,000. It has been a stagnant quantity, and a good deal below the estimate. In dried fruits there is an increase of £20,000. On wines there is a decrease of £58,000. The consumption of wine has been constantly and rapidly diminishing. In 1876 the total quantity consumed was 18,600,000 gallons. In 1893 it was 14,150,000 gallons, or a diminution of 4,450,000 gallons. Strong wines—*i.e.*, port, sherry, &c.—have fallen from

11,000,000 gallons, in 1876, to 4,700,000 gallons in 1893—a decrease of 6,300,000 gallons, showing the great change of taste for these stronger wines. Light wines, including sparkling wines, on the contrary, have increased from 7,600,000 gallons, in 1876, to 9,500,000 gallons in 1893, or an increase of 1,900,000 gallons. These lighter wines come in at a lower duty, and the yield to the Revenue has fallen from £1,750,000, in 1876, to £1,200,000 in 1893, or a loss of £550,000, equivalent to one-third of the whole duty, since 1876. The loss this year has again been far beyond the estimate. If we leave out of account wines, which are an article of consumption of the wealthier classes, the total produce of the Customs for the year 1893-94 would be £152,000 in excess of the preceding year, on what may be called the staple articles of consumption of the mass of the people. I venture to think that this is not only financially, but socially, a most satisfactory return. It shows that on the main taxable articles, which constitute the comforts of the people, there is no evidence of pinching, no sign of diminished resources or consuming powers in the mass of the nation; but that, even in this trying year, there has been a substantial increase. I now turn to Excise. The estimated yield for the year 1893-94 was £25,100,000. The amount paid into the Exchequer was £25,200,000, or £100,000 more than the estimate. The net receipts have been £25,247,000, as compared with the net receipts of £25,283,000 in the preceding year. That is a net decrease of £36,000, which is insignificant on such a total as £25,000,000. Pursuing the remarks I have made on the Customs, I may say that it is upon Excise, perhaps, that falls, first and most heavily, the weight of unprosperous times, of diminished wages, and lessened consuming power in the people. A decrease of £36,000 on a Revenue of over £25,000,000 does not indicate any falling off of consuming power. The particulars of this head are deserving of notice. As to spirits, the Spirit Duty receipts were £15,190,000, or £50,000 more than the estimate. Up to the middle of August, 1893, the duty had fallen off by £340,000. But by the end of the year the decline, as compared with the former year, was only £94,000. I am bound to say that this is possibly and even probably due in part to those nervous anticipations of the Budget which overtake some members of the trade in the last days of the financial year. Very often, just before the Budget, larger quantities of spirits are taken out than properly belong to the consumption of the year. It is remarkable that the loss on spirits has been compensated by the gain upon beer. On beer the net receipts have been £9,537,000, or £132,000 more than the estimate, and £91,000 more than the receipts of the previous year. The consumption is the highest on record, exceeding any former year by £80,000. I believe that this has something to do with the drought. I am told that when the weather is hot there is more beer and less spirits drunk, and that when the weather is cold there is more spirits and less beer drunk. At any rate, we find that the decrease in the consumption of spirits is almost exactly compensated by the increased revenue from beer. The Land Tax and House Duty was estimated at £2,460,000, and the amount paid into the Exchequer was exactly the same. Post Office and Telegraphs were estimated at £13,080,000, and the actual receipts have been £13,010,000. The Post Office receipts have been £130,000 less than the estimate, and the Telegraph receipts have been £60,000 more than the estimate. Miscellaneous receipts were estimated at £1,950,000, and the actual receipts were £2,058,000. I next turn to the important and critical head of the Income Tax. There has probably been no year more adverse in its circumstances to the yield of that impost than the year 1893. The estimated produce was £15,150,000. The amount paid into the Exchequer was £15,200,000, or £50,000 beyond the estimate. It is said that that is due to measures taken to get in the Income Tax. But that is not so. We have not in the past year, because it was a year of deficit, pressed in the last penny we could get. Had we done so we should have avoided a deficit altogether. It was rather tempting when I had the money in hand; but we have not sought to deplete, nor have we depleted, the Income Tax receipts of this year to make up a deficiency in last. Now, if you add together the heads of revenue which I have enumerated, and also Crown Lands and interest, you will find they represent receipts amounting to

£78,273,000, and the variation from the estimate upon this vast sum amounts to only £233,000, and that is in excess of the estimated receipts on those heads. We may say, therefore, that on more than three-fourths of the whole Revenue the outcome has fairly exceeded the estimate. There remains practically only the Stamp Revenue to be taken into consideration, upon which alone there appears a serious falling-off. The Stamp Revenue was estimated to yield £13,600,000, as against the net receipt for 1892-93 of £13,788,000. The net receipts in 1893-94 under this head have been £12,799,000, showing a falling-off of £989,000 as compared with the previous year's yield, and £800,000 below the estimate. Stamps are divided into two principal heads—first, what may be called business stamps; and, secondly, the Death Duty stamps, which form the far larger portion of the whole. The figures for the business stamps are as follows:—Estimated receipts, £5,500,000; net receipts, £5,222,000. That is, less than the estimate by £278,000; and the falling-off in the net receipts as compared with 1892-93 was £215,000. The stagnation on the Stock Exchange and the Money Market and the wise indisposition to embark on new enterprises at home and abroad fully account for this decrease. The yield of the Death Duties requires special notice. The net receipts on Probate and Estate Duty are £60,000 less than the preceding year. This is not a material reduction on a total of nearly £4,000,000, it being merely a decrease of about 1¾ per cent. Shrinkage of values in so many securities shows there must have been large increase of wealth and savings in other directions. On Legacy and Succession Duty there is a very heavy falling-off in net receipts—£714,000 as compared with 1892-93, and £316,000 as compared with the estimate. The produce of these duties, however, depends so much upon consanguinity—a large property going to a child producing comparatively little, while a property of similar value going to a stranger produces a considerable sum—that it is difficult to make an estimate of its yield. The yield of these duties during the year 1892-93 compares not unfavourably with that of 1891-92. The right hon. Gentleman opposite and hon. Members generally know what an extraordinary rise there was in these duties in the year 1891-92, which is called the "influenza year," when the increase in consequence of the great number of deaths amounted to nearly £1,000,000, and therefore in estimating the produce of these duties we must not judge by the standard of that year. Taking the whole into account, the total Revenue paid into the Exchequer in the year was £91,133,000, as compared with the Estimate of £91,640,000, showing a deficiency of Revenue of £507,000, a variation from the Estimate of about ½ per cent. only. Before we leave the Revenue Accounts I should like to make the remark that the fact that, after a period of disturbance and depression like that through which we have passed, we should have realised the Estimate within ½ per cent. on a total of over £91,000,000 (or, if we add the revenue paid to Local Authorities, on a total of over £98,000,000) is, I think, a marvellous accomplishment. It is a striking testimony, first, to the solidity of your financial system and resources; and, secondly, to the great sagacity and experience of the able permanent staff upon whom its administration mainly depends. Those who have watched this matter with a knowledge of the vicissitudes which put at hazard such calculations in the most serene times may well applaud the skill of those who, in the exceptional difficulties of the last year, have achieved so successful a forecast, and I am sure I may invite for them the merited approbation of the Committee. Besides this evidence from the Revenue Receipts, the indications of the Savings Banks are equally satisfactory. The net receipts on the Post Office and Trustee Savings Banks, which were in 1888-89 £966,000, in 1892-93 £2,200,000, were in 1893-94 £3,400,000. There has been an increase of £1,000,000 since the Savings Bank Act of last Session came into operation. The most recent figures since the date of the enlarged limits of deposit are very remarkable and encouraging. The net cash deposits from December 21, 1892, to March 31, 1893, were £2,147,000, and from December 21, 1893, to March 24, 1894, which was one week less, they were £3,220,000, or an excess in three months of over £1,000,000. Leaving this question of the Revenue, a general review of the condition of the people, derived from these different sources, is not unsatisfactory. In the first place, there is no sign of any diminution in the resources or consuming power of the wage-earning class. Secondly, the Savings Banks Return proves that they have the power and the desire to lay by their economies. Thirdly, as regards the wealthier classes, though, as we are well aware, there have been serious diminutions of income from agricultural depression and shrinkage of dividends, the stability of the Income Tax and the Probate Duty shows that their losses have been to a great extent recouped by a growth of wealth and savings in other directions. I will ask the Committee to pause for a moment at this outcome of what may truly be called an ill-starred year. I ask you in no invidious spirit to consider how the British system of finance, currency, and commerce has stood the storm and weathered the gale. Compare it with the results in other States who have relied upon different principles of commercial, financial, and monetary policy. You will find, I think, nothing which should encourage you to adopt inflationist doctrines or protectionist practice under the severe experience through which we have passed comparatively unscathed. It is a practical warning not to allow ourselves under the occasional pressure of distress to listen to the counsels of empirics and shake the solid foundations upon which British credit stands. I now have to set against this history of the Revenue of 1893-94 that of the Expenditure defrayed within the year. The Budget Estimate for 1893-94 was £91,464,000, and the amount issued to meet expenditure was £91,303,000, or £161,000 less than the Budget Estimate. There were Supplementary Estimates as follows:—For the Army £195,000, for Education £224,000, for South Africa £89,000, and for sundries £84,000, making a total of £592,000. If there had been no Supplementary Estimates there would have been a good surplus: but I do not complain, because the Supplementary Estimates amount to about £125,000 less than the average of the previous five years. On the other hand, the savings from issues of the previous year and on the year amounted to the sum of £743,000. This shows a difference of £161,000, and that on the right side, on an estimated expenditure of £91,500,000, which is pretty close. As I have already said, if I had chosen to press the collection of Revenue abnormally, and especially the Income Tax, I could easily have transformed this deficit into a moderate surplus. But I did not regard this as sound finance. As it is, I may incidentally mention that the Revenue of the year has been, in fact, more than sufficient to meet the true Expenditure properly belonging to the year, for there was under the head of Expenditure a sum of £290,000 issued to the Naval Defence Account, which belongs to the Naval Defence Debt Fund, and not to the proper Expenditure of the year. I shall have occasion to refer to this item later on. With regard to the balances in the Exchequer, we commenced the year 1893-4 with a balance of £5,083,000. We closed the year with a balance of £5,977,000. There was outstanding on March 31, 1894, and since repaid, £750,000 in the form of advances on Ways and Means, making the true balance £5,227,000, or £144,000 better than last year. I will now state the figures relating to the National Debt. The Funded Debt in the course of the year has been reduced by £1,902,000, the capital value of the Terminable Annuities by £3,629,000, the Savings Banks deficiency by £385,000, and the other liabilities by £158,000, making a total reduction of £6,074,000. On the other hand, there were additions under the Barracks Act £673,000, and under the Telegraph Act £164,000, making a total of £837,000; so that the gross liabilities were reduced by £5,237,000. After deducting a small diminution of assets, £264,000, the net reduction will be £4,973,000. In addition to this, there is available the greater part of the New Sinking Fund, £1,601,000, on which I shall have something to say presently. So that we may consider that the sum available for reduction in the year will be £6,574,000. I have always been desirous that the amount of the Unfunded Debt, so far as it may be considered a Floating Debt in the hands of the public, should be reduced. This has been effected in the present year by close upon £3,000,000, which have passed from the hands of the public into those of the National Debt Commissioners, though the amount of the Unfunded Debt has actually been decreased by an inconsiderable sum only. The Unfunded Debt in the hands of the public is now only £11,600,000, and it is expected during the course of the present year it will be further reduced by £750,000. This completes the Statement relating to the year which has just concluded. I now turn to the more interesting prospects of the coming year. I wish I could promise they would prove equally satisfactory. The Committee are familiar with the estimated Expenditure for which I have to provide. The total for which I have to provide, being £95,458,000, is larger than the amount I had to provide a year ago—namely, £91,464,000—by the sum of £3,994,000. The only head under which there is any material decrease is under Consolidated Fund Services, mainly owing to the cesser of the annuity, £200,000, set up to repay debt created for purchase of Suez Canal shares, and now discharged. Of the total increased provision that has to be made, the demands of the Admiralty account for £3,126,000. The increased provision for the Civil Service is £558,000, of which the main item is £470,000 for Education. My right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council has his quiver full, and I do not grudge him that increased sum for the better education of the country. The remainder of the increase, £88,000, is for Public Works. There is an increased provision of £300,000 to be made for the Postal Services, balanced, I am sorry to say, by an estimated increase in revenue of only £180,000. But this great total of £95,458,000 does not represent the entire amount which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to provide. He has, in addition, to find about £7,250,000 for local expenditure—that is, for expenditure met out of revenue which is handed over to the Local Authorities; so that the real total which he has to raise for the service of the year has now amounted to about £102,700,000. It is not my business to discuss the Estimates or Expenditure. What I have to do is to find the money. I should, however, like to call the attention of the Committee to the growth of Expenditure in this country. If you take the Return of my right hon. Friend the present Secretary of State for India, and compare the Expenditure in 1875-6 with the estimated Expenditure for 1894-5, I find that the increase in the total annual Expenditure in those 20 years is £23,823,000. Of this the increase on the Army and Navy amounts to £12,000,000, the increase on Education is £6,200,000, and the increase in grants to Local Authorities is £6,500,000. These represent the main items. There is only one head of reduction, and that not a very satisfactory item of economy. I refer to the diminution for the liquidation of the National Debt, amounting to £1,739,000. I ask the Committee to observe these figures. Your Expenditure has increased far more rapidly than your Revenue, and, in these conditions, you must expect the consequences. You are not in a position to remit, but you are under the obligation to impose, taxation. That is the rate at which you are living. Under such conditions relief of taxation is impracticable; your Expenditure grows faster than your Revenue. What are the resources with which we have to meet this Expenditure? I now come to the Estimate of Revenue for the current year. There is a popular impression that, looking at the results of last quarter, we could anticipate this year a considerable increase of Revenue. I am sorry to say that is not the case. In some items, yes; but not upon all. Customs for the current year we take at £19,850,000, an increase of about £140,000 above the Exchequer receipts of last year. Excise we take at £25,060,000, or £140,000 less than the Exchequer receipts of last year. This is due to accelerated payments at the close of the last financial year. Stamps we put at £13,080,000, or more than the Exchequer receipts of last year by £220,000. We count upon some recovery on this head. We estimate the duties from Land Tax and House Duty at £2,470,000, or £10,000 more than the Exchequer receipts of last year. Income Tax we take at £15,200,000. This is the same as the Exchequer receipts of last year. The arrears at the 7d. rate are set off against the expected decrease in the yield owing to the substitution of a bad year (1893) for a good year (1890) in the assessment on trade profits. Each penny we estimate will yield £2,130,000. I take the Revenue from the Post Office and Telegraph Services at £13,190,000, that is an increase over last year of £180,000—£100,000 on Post Office and £80,000 on Telegraphs. Crown Lands I put at the same figure as last year—namely, £420,000. In regard to interest on loans, &c., this head of Revenue rarely varies ; but this year it will be £82,000 less than usual, owing to the cessation of payment by Egypt in respect of the Suez Canal shares. Miscellaneous Revenue we cannot put higher than £1,550,000, about £500,000 less than the receipts of last year. The decrease is mainly due to our not having again such windfalls as we had in 1893-94 in the shape of—(1) a payment from the Treasury Chest Fund, £300,000 ; and (2) arrears of the previous year, nearly £200,000. This is the main item in the decreased Estimate of Revenue for the current year. The total estimated Revenue will, therefore, be taken at £90,956,000, or less by £177,000 than the Exchequer receipts of last year—namely, £91,133,000. But, if we leave out of account the decreases under the head of Interest and Miscellaneous Revenue, amounting to £590,000, the yield of the taxes and Post Office combined is taken at an increase of £413,000 over last year—not so large an increase as has been generally supposed, but as large as, under the circumstances, I feel justified in making. I will now give the balance-sheet for the year 1894-95, on the basis of the existing taxes as they stand. The total Revenue is £90,956,000 ; the total Expenditure is £95,458,000 ; and the deficit to be met will thus be seen to be £4,502,000—a very formidable sum to deal with. How is this vast deficit to be met ? I answer, first, and emphatically, not by borrowing. Not by abandoning the fixed and permanent provisions for the liquidation of the Debt. This Expenditure does not partake in any sense of a permanent character. It relates to things which perish in the using, which perish still more in the fashion. The period of a battleship is as fickle as that of a lady's bonnet. Next season we shall be told that all we have done and are doing is superseded, and the amateurs, like the ladies, will tell us we have nothing to wear. We do not, therefore, propose to break up the fixed charge or permanent fund set apart for the reduction of the Debt. To take such a course in time of peace in order to meet expenditure which we regard as indispensable, not exceptionally, but as a part of the regular demands for the defence of the country, would be a fatal and a cowardly error, unworthy of a great nation. I pray the Committee to consider the vital consequences, alike in peace and in war, of this great, perhaps the greatest of all national reserves—a reserve not less valuable, even more valuable, than the Naval and Military Reserves. In peace time our financial credit depends upon the confidence which is felt that the nation is ready and willing to make all the sacrifices necessary to meet its needs and obligations ; that its policy is not to increase, but to diminish, the Public Debt. The stability of your currency and your commercial prosperity is very greatly sustained by the constancy and fortitude with which this principle is maintained. I will invite anyone who doubts this to regard the effect upon their finance in other States where great military expenditure is promoted in peace time by borrowed money. In time of war this fund becomes a priceless resource—a resource not less powerful than ships, or guns, or men. Indeed, it is the source from which all these are provided and maintained. What is indispensable is that at the commencement of the war you should be in a position to expend at once, and instantly, vast sums, which are necessary under the conditions of modern warfare, for a sudden and vital struggle. The Permanent Debt Fund provides you with this reserve. A fund of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 will enable you, even without raising taxation, to command an immense sum. The Debt Fund represents the interest of, say, £200,000,000 of money. You could not do a more unwise or spendthrift act than to dissipate in peace this great reserve. It is your "war chest." Let nothing induce you to shirk this primary obligation. If you desire to impress on foreign nations a conviction of your strength and your resolution to maintain your Empire, do not by a culpable weakness give any room for the belief that you are wanting in the resolution to make the sacrifices which are necessary. The opinion of strength is as potent as the means to exert it. Let us sustain by our conduct the might of this opinion. These are present demands to meet present needs. We have no right to shuffle them off our own shoulders and foist them on our successors. Think of the sacrifices which your fathers made in respect of taxation for that which they deemed necessary for the good of their country, with not one-half the population, with not one-tenth of your wealth. What was the taxation they consented to endure? The burden of the interest of the Debt, in their days, was a great deal more than half the Revenue; to-day it is not one-fifth part. We have no proposals to make which will have the effect of diverting from the discharge of Debt any part of the Permanent Fund which is now applicable to its liquidation. With us that is fundamental. But there are debts and debts. There is the old debt bequeathed to us by past generations. There is, unfortunately, a new debt, transmitted to us by the last Parliament. They are both debts which we are equally bound to discharge. I will speak now of the most recent debt. It consists of various sums which have been borrowed under the Imperial Defence Act and the Naval Defence Act; which were borrowed for works now completed, and which have no application to any existing expenditure. They constitute a mortgage on our present Revenue. Their amount is:—Under the Imperial Defence Act, £2,600,000; under the Naval Defence Act, £3,146,000—total, £5,746,000. In order to defray these new debts a charge has been created on what would otherwise be the Revenue of the present year. I ventured at the time to protest against this proceeding, as throwing on future years a burden which they ought not to bear, and which, as has proved to be the case, they might be less able to bear than the years in which the debt was incurred. This plan of proceeding can never have been adopted except under the belief that the programme of the Imperial and Naval Defence Acts would have so abundantly equipped our naval and military establishments that upon their completion there would arise an opportunity for reduction rather than an increase of Expenditure. This was the view taken in 1887 and 1888 by the late Government, when large reductions were made in the Naval Estimates on the ground of the great additions made under the Northbrook programme. Except upon this hypothesis the whole proceeding would have been utterly unjustifiable. I desire to make my acknowledgment to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the author of that plan, for the statement he made in the House of Commons on Thursday last—a statement which was extremely candid and extremely honourable to him. I will remind those who were not present of what my right hon. Friend said—

> "I will be quite frank with the Committee. The Secretary to the Admiralty has said that he is sure that, if I had known that our naval defence programme was not to be an exceptional effort, I should not have taken the particular financial step I did take. I think he is right. I admit that we did consider it to be an exceptional effort; we were wrong. At that time no one thought that it would be necessary to make additional proposals, like those now made, and I make a present to my political opponents of this statement, that if we had foreseen the final result we should not have taken the particular financial steps which we did take."

I think that is a most candid and honourable statement, and I hope I shall not, therefore, be regarded as acting in any manner as hostile to his policy when I suggest to the Committee a method for dealing with that debt. I hope even to have the assent in the manner of dealing with it of the right hon. Gentleman himself. This is a debt in the plainest sense of the word, and it must be cleared off. Indeed, a new debt is worse than an old debt, because it is the mark of an active deterioration and decay. It is a new encumbrance, which must be liquidated either before or concurrently with the old debt. The least we can ask is that, when we are called upon to cope with the immense charges we have to meet, the existing revenue of the year should be relieved of these extraordinary burdens before we are called upon to impose new taxes. This new debt so contracted must be wiped out as part of the general debt charge out of the fixed fund appropriated for that purpose. Let me remind the House of what are the constituent parts of the present fixed fund for the liquidation of debt. In round figures they are—(1) Annuities (about) £4,800,000, (2) new Sinking Fund £1,800,000, making £6,600,000. The old Sinking Fund is unfortunately at present a minus quantity. As regards the Terminable Annuities, I see the greatest objection to meddling with them. They ought not, except under the greatest extremity, to be disturbed at all. I held that view in 1886, and I do not propose to disturb the Terminable Annuities at all. There remains the new Sinking Fund, which I propose to appropriate to the discharge of this new debt until it is liquidated. The new Sinking Fund for the past year amounted to £1,827,000, of which £226,000 has been already appropriated to the payment off of the 3½ per cent. Annuities, so that the balance was £1,601,000, which has been held back in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners. The new Sinking Fund of the current year will amount, at a moderate estimate, to £1,850,000. I shall have this year from the two Sinking Funds a sum of £3,451,000, which will go in part discharge of this debt. At the close of the present financial year the Imperial and Naval Defence Loans (£5,746,000) should be reduced to about £2,300,000, which will nearly be cleared off by the new Sinking Fund in 1895-96. In this way the Revenue of the present and future years will be relieved from this encumbrance, and there will be the additional advantage that the public accounts will be freed from the confusion in which they are now involved by these enactments. Provisions will be inserted in the Budget Bill to enable these transactions to be carried out. As a consequence of the liquidation of the debt the Revenue will be relieved of these charges to the extent I have stated. They will also enable the Revenue to receive sums of money of which it has been deprived by the plan of the Imperial Defence Act. The interest on the Suez Canal shares is mortgaged for four years to come to the extent of £600,000 a year. If the capital sum so borrowed is discharged the Revenue derived from these dividends will be available for the Exchequer, and for the present year they will amount to £260,000. We shall have further relief from the discharge of this debt in regard to the interest on the debt which is now charged upon the Army and Navy Votes. Those Votes bear a charge of £145,000. There is also a sum of £289,000, which belongs to the Naval Defence Account. It is money which has been paid over to the Naval Defence Account in excess of the authorised expenditure of £10,000,000. This sum under the existing law would be applied to repay the loan under the Naval Defence Act, but, the loan being liquidated by the Sinking Fund, this sum may be properly restored to the Exchequer. I will just sum up what will be the effect upon the Revenue of the present year. The annuity now charged upon the Consolidated Fund and the Naval Defence Act is £1,429,000; interest on the Army and Navy Votes is £145,000, making £1,574,000. That will reduce the estimated Expenditure from £95,458,000 to £93,884,000. Besides that, we shall get in increased Revenue £260,000 from the Suez Canal, from the Naval Defence Fund £289,000, or £549,000 in all, and that will increase the Revenue from £90,956,000 to £91,505,000, the result of the whole of these transactions being that if they are carried out they will reduce the deficit with which we have to deal to an amount of £2,379,000. If we had been free from the incubus of this new debt, and if the naval expenditure had stood at the figure of last year, we should have had £747,000 available for the reduction of taxation. As it is, we have to put on additional taxation to meet a deficit, which, having been reduced in the manner I have proposed, amounts to £2,379,000. Now, Sir, I am coming to a more serious matter. I am afraid I have to inflict upon the Committee a dull half-hour, but I have to deal with a difficult and complicated subject. In order to grapple with a subject of that magnitude it will be necessary to have recourse to the great staple branches of the Revenue. It is no use peddling with small taxes which irritate and embarrass small trades without producing any considerable revenue. The Committee will anticipate that the first subject to which I shall refer is the Death Duties. Even without the pressure of immediate necessity, it would be a mere act of financial justice to redress inequalities which have too long existed. It is difficult to understand how the intolerable injustice of the relations between the taxation of various kinds of property under the Death Duties has been so long endured. We are bound to undertake the solution of this question by the pledge given in the important Resolution moved by the right hon. Member for Midlothian on the Second Reading of the Budget Bill in 1888. I will remind the Committee of that Resolution. It was—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, after Parliament shall have made the appropria-

tions it may deem just in the relief of local rates, the duties accruing upon death shall be so fixed as to equalise the charge upon real and personal property respectively."

I have not time to enter on a lengthened disquisition on the history of those duties and their anomalous incidence. In a general way they are familiar to most people. A sort of defence has been set up that there was a compensation to be found in the heavier burden to which particular kinds of property were subject under other taxes. But these sorts of compensation are unsound in principle and mischievous in practice. It is far better to place both taxes on a fair and equal basis than to attempt to counterbalance one inequality by the creation of another. The whole subject is admittedly difficult and complicated. The Death Duties have grown up piecemeal, and bear traces of their fragmen ary origin. They have never been established upon any general principles, and they present an extraordinary specimen of tessellated legislation. Various endeavours have been made at different times to redress some of their inequalities. Here a patch and there a patch, but each successive modification has only left confusion worse confounded. In the fraction of time which I can devote to this subject I can only present to the Committee a very faint outline. There exist at present five duties—the Probate Duty, the Account Duty, the Estate Duty (which, however, was only imposed for seven years and expires in 1896), the Legacy Duty, and the Succession Duty. The Probate, Account, and the Legacy Duties affect personalty; the Estate and Succession Duties affect both personalty and realty. But there is a more important distinction—namely, the point of view from which these duties are levied. The difference may be illustrated by the examples of the Probate and the Legacy Duties. Probate is a duty imposed on the whole *corpus* of the personal property which passes to a man's executor or administrator at his death. The Account Duty and the Estate Duty are similar to it in that they deal with the *corpus* of the estates to which they apply and that the duty is charged on the amount of the capital passing, irrespective of its destination. For shortness, I will call these the A duty class. The principle of this A duty is to look solely at the amount of property passing, without regard to its subsequent destination or distribution. I now turn to what I will call the B class of duty. Of this the Legacy Duty is an example. The B class of duty is an additional tax imposed on the interest which a man derives from property left to him or devolving upon him. This duty regards not the amount of the estate which the deceased leaves, but the amount of interest which the successor takes, and the rate of it is determined by his relationship to the man from whom he takes it—a distinction which is not made in the case of the A duty. This is the general character of the Legacy and Succession Duties. The point of view of the A duty class is the amount of property left. The point of view of the B duty class is the interest of the individual successor and his relationship to the predecessors. It is obvious that, accepting these principles, these duties should severally be applied with equality to all classes of property. But it is not so. The A duty is imposed, in the shape of Probate Duty, on personalty passing by will or intestacy, and, in the shape of Account Duty, on personalty included in voluntary settlements and some other things, but it is not imposed on personalty included in other forms of settlement, or on any form of realty, settled or unsettled. In the case of the B duty, the principle is not equally applied. There is an unfair distinction between personalty and realty. In the case of personalty the duty is in all cases charged according to the interest of the beneficiary—that is, if he takes a life interest, he pays on the value of that interest; whereas, if he takes an absolute interest, he pays on the principal value of what he takes. But, in the case of realty, the beneficiary pays in all cases only on his life interest, even when he takes an absolute interest—fee-simple—in property. These inequalities are not denied. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, attempted in some degree to redress them. He somewhat raised the B duty on realty, in order to compensate its exemption from duty A. He imposed also an Estate Duty, the object of which he thus described—

"The new duty will be charged similarly on both realty and personalty—that is to say, on the capital value, when the property passes absolutely."

I entirely accept this principle, and what we desire is to carry it out to its legitimate conclusion. I have not time now to discuss the right hon. Gentleman's plans in detail; but they have failed of their avowed intention—they have not redressed the inequality, either in respect of settled property or of realty. Realty is not taxed upon the principal value; it is taxed on the value of the life interest of the successor. The basis of calculation is, not the principal value of the land, but the annual rental. It is, in effect, a tax upon rent, which is a wholly different thing. I have here a table which will illustrate this matter by concrete instances better than any elaborate statement. I will take the case of a property of the market value of £15,000. If it is what is called free personal property, or anything else not settled, that property will pay 3 per cent. Probate Duty, £450; and Estate Duty, 1 per cent., £150, making £600. Supposing the same property is under settlement, it will pay Succession Duty, £225; Estate Duty, £150, or a total of £375, instead of £600. If it were divided into two properties it would only pay £225 instead of £600. Now, let us take the case of land, or real property, of the market value of £15,000. I take the age of the successor at 35. The net rental at 4½ per cent. is £675; the Succession Duty would be £139 10s., the Estate Duty £130 10s., or a total of £270, as against £600, or about one-half. If there were two successors and no personalty there would be no Estate Duty, and the charge would be only £139 10s., instead of £600. I do not go into the figures, but upon collaterals generally the charge in the case of realty will not be much more than half that on free personalty, and, when there are two successors to realty alone, less than one-half. There is a great distinction between leasehold and freehold property. The one—that is the leasehold—is taxed for the purpose of probate as personal property, and the other — the freehold—is exempted from probate as realty. Leaseholds are always diminishing in value; but freeholds, on the other hand, are generally increasing in value. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!" and "Hear!"] I am afraid that there are some freeholds that are not increasing in value, but there are a good many that are. I should think if you took some of the ground-rent proprietors in London they would not tell you that their receipts were decreasing. Now, I will suppose a person—A—who owns two sets of trade premises, each worth £200 per annum net annual value, the one, a leasehold, having, say, 60 years to run, and the other, a freehold. The properties are rated equally for local purposes, but mark the difference of their contribution under the Death Duties to Imperial taxation. A, the father, leaves the leasehold to his son B, who pays probate at 3 per cent. on £3,000, which is 15 years' purchase. The amount of probate he will pay is £90. He leaves the freehold to another son, C. The freehold at 20 years' purchase is worth £4,000, but the tax in this case being under the Succession Duty is only valued on the life interest. Assuming C to be 44 (the average age of successors) his life interest in the property, of £200 net annual value, would be £2,800, and on that he would pay 1½ per cent., or £42. Therefore the leasehold, which is really worth £3,000, pays £90, while the freehold, which is worth £4,000, only pays £42. It ought at equal rates to pay £120. That is to say, the leasehold pays nearly three times as much as the freehold. Now, is it possible to justify a system of taxation of that kind? I beg leave to call the attention of people interested in urban populations to this question of the position of the leaseholder and the freeholder. I have received a Memorial from the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom urging a reform of the Death Duties, and they give the following illustration of the inequalities of taxation according to the different character of the property. The figures they gave were not absolutely correct, but I have had them corrected by the Inland Revenue authorities. They suppose the case of a testator leaving a nephew, aged 35, a property of £100,000, yielding a net income of £5,000. They show that if the property were a freehold mill with fixed machinery the Succession Duty would be £3,543. If the same property were directed to be sold and the proceeds paid to the nephew, though he elected to take the property unconverted, the duty would be £4,500. If the same property were leasehold the Probate and Succession Duty would be

£4,662, and if the testator directed the property to be sold as before the duty would be £6,000. I have given these examples in order to convince the Committee that the present state of the law is unjustifiable and intolerable. The object of the proposal the Government have to make is to effect completely what the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Goschen) avowed to be his object—to make as complete an assimilation of the charges on all kinds of property in respect of the Death Duties as the nature of the case permits. The proposal of the Government, therefore, is this. We propose to clear the ground by abolishing or merging the present Probate Duty, the Account Duty, the Estate Duty, and the addition made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite to the Succession Duty and to start afresh. We constitute in their place a single duty of the A class, of which probate is the type, which we propose to call the Estate Duty. We borrow the right hon. Gentleman's principle, and we borrow his name. We carry out his principle, however, to its legitimate conclusion. The Estate Duty will be charged according to the principal value of all property, whether real or personal, settled or unsettled, which passes on the death of any person, whether by the disposition of the deceased or by a settlement made by others. That is the broad and general principle. In this duty regard will only be had to the sum total of the property passing, and not at all to the persons to whom or the shares in which it passes. The governing principle is this. Upon the devolution of property of all descriptions the State takes its share first—before any of the successors in title or beneficiaries. The reason on which this is founded is plain. The title of the State to a share in the accumulated property of the deceased is an anterior title to that of the interest to be taken by those who are to share it. The State has the first title upon the estate, and those who take afterwards have a subsequent and subordinate title. Nature gives a man no power over his earthly goods beyond the term of his life. What power he possesses to prolong his will after his death—the right of a dead hand to dispose of property—is a pure creation of the law, and the State has the right to prescribe the conditions and limitations under which that power shall be exercised. The right to make wills or settlements or successions is the creation of positive law. In case of default of disposition by intestacy, the State settles the destination of the property under the Statute of Distribution. It is most important to keep that clearly in view. The objection is often taken that taxes of this kind are so hard upon this person or that person, but a duty like the Probate Duty, where property is bequeathed by will, knows nothing of distinctions of persons who are to be benefited by the will. We deduct the share of the State, and then the persons interested take according to their several shares. Suppose a man leaves property amounting to £100,000, the Probate Duty, which will now be the Estate Duty, is deducted before anyone gets anything. The deduction may be £4,000. What really belongs to the beneficiaries is not £100,000 but £96,000, and they never had a right to anything more. [*Opposition laughter.*] That is the principle of the new Estate Duty. Those who laugh cannot have read the most elementary books on political economy and finance. The State is to take its share from the *corpus* of the whole property passing on the death of the deceased, of whatever kind or description that property may be. That principle is so simple and so just—[*Opposition laughter.*] I never supposed till this moment that that was a principle which anyone disputed. It is a principle which has been laid down in this House for a very long time, and it had been laid down in every work that has ever professed to deal with political economy. Therefore I was not prepared to argue it. I have taken it as an axiom of finance. The real difficulty arises in the application of the principle. The difficulty arises from the complication of the Law of Settlement, and the Law of Real Property, and likewise from the nature of real property. As to free personalty, you have to deal only with the executors, but in the case of settlements, you must have recourse to trustees, and you may often have to deal with the dispositions of persons, other than the deceased. Real property passes immediately to the devisee or heir, and, when settled, presents the same difficulties as those to which I have referred in the case of settled property. That constitutes, no doubt, a difficulty in regard to collection. The evils from which we suffer, not only in this respect, but in all dispositions of property, exist to a degree which makes the United Kingdom the most lawyer-ridden country in the world. These complications are the work of the astute and ingenious professors of the law. They are the result of the accumulated subtleties of conveyancing. They are expensive and unintelligible to everyone who is not well paid to understand them. It is a difficult business to unravel and break through all their cobwebs, but in principle there is no reason why settled property should be favoured in comparison with unsettled property. Settlements may be good things in some cases, but they are certainly very bad things in others, and there is assuredly no reason why they should be favoured by any fiscal exemptions. You cannot by fiscal enactments alter the Law of Settlement, but you may provide that settlements shall not be unduly favoured in respect of taxation. To show again what a faithful disciple I am of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I should like to read a sentence upon the subject of settlements from his Budget Speech of 1889. He said—

> "The whole theory of the Death Duties is that the State claims a share in all property passing on death. If I may use a phrase of legitimate exaggeration, a portion of the Death Duties is practically evaded by settlement. From my point of view, every settlement if not a fraud upon the Death Duties, at all events, makes a serious inroad on what I may term the rights of the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

I beg attention to what follows—

> "I do not feel sure that equity and analogy do not require that a higher duty should be put upon settlements to compensate for the heavy loss to the Death Duties which they bring about."

As regards real property, there is no reason why it should be charged at a different rate from other property, why the duty on it should be charged on a life interest when the real interest taken is the fee-simple, why it should be estimated on an annuity, which in the case of the best classes of property, such as ground rents, produces a sum far below the principal value on which other property is valued. This is one of the few countries in the world where such a principle is adopted. I find in *The Statistical Society's Journal*, Part 85, this statement—

> "Coming next to the question of this modification or mode of estimating the value of real property, and the substitution of the actual realisable value for the fictitious value obtained by multiplying the income by a given quantity, we find there are only two countries besides France in which the assessment of Succession Duties on real estate is based on the fictitious, and not the real, value. Those countries are England and Belgium. In determining the value of real estate in all other countries, the duty is levied on the realisable value of the property."

I have forgotten to mention that, in taking principal value as the basis of the tax, we reform a glaring injustice of exempting property which has a high selling value, though yielding little or no annual rent. There is the well-known Lord Sefton's case, where there was property yielding no rent at all, on the banks of the Mersey. Well, he paid no Succession Duty upon that, and very shortly afterwards he sold the property for a very large sum. The Inland Revenue claimed Succession Duty upon what he had received, but the land had no annual value, and it therefore paid nothing. This applies to the question of ground-rents and ground values. You may have a ground value which is very small, and yet you may sell that property to-morrow for an immense sum of money. There is no more difficulty in estimating the principal value of real property than that of jewels or pictures. The real test is what experienced persons estimate would be the fair market value at the time and under the circumstances. That real estate should not be treated on a more favourable footing than other property was laid down by Mr. Pitt in 1795.

> "In a war for the protection of property it was just and equitable that property should bear the burden, and as it was in the nature of things that landed property was the most permanent it was fit that it should contribute accordingly."

That principle was rejected then by the House of Commons of those days, but I venture to say that it will not be rejected by the House of Commons of to-day. But, to take a later example, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen), in his able Report of 1871, stated that—

> "Out of the total Imperial taxation, land in England paid, in 1868, 5·28 per cent.; in France, 18·43 per cent.; in Prussia, 11·39 per cent.; in Belgium, 20·72 per cent.; in Russia, 11·21 per cent.; in Austria, 17·54 per cent.; in Hungary, 32·30 per cent.; and" (he added) "from these figures it is apparent to what a small extent the taxation of land has been available for Imperial purposes in the United

Kingdom as compared with the whole of the Continent."

If it is urged, as is unfortunately true, that the value of land has greatly fallen in this country, it will be remembered that the charge will be the less in proportion to the fall in value, and that land will, like other properties, only be taxed on what it is worth and what it will fetch. One difficulty we have to meet is one which would have been remedied if the House of Lords had not rejected the Land Transfer Bill introduced by the late Government in 1889, by which land would have passed, like personal property, to the lands of the executors. There may be more difficulty in realising at once the tax on real property, and regard should be had to this consideration, so long as in the end the same amount is realised on real property as that which is levied in other cases. The situation of settled property will also require special treatment, but the charge in the end should be the same. All these are questions of the manner of collection, which will have to be dealt with at a later date, and their difficulty, no doubt, is great; but I have not time to enlarge on them now. We have done our best to solve them; and I have no doubt that, with the assistance of the Committee, we shall be able to arrive at some reasonable conclusion. So long as the equal contribution of all classes of property is kept intact we have a very open mind as to the method of effecting it. It is very desirable and very important to interfere as little as possible with the existing system of administering the law, round which has grown up a great mass of established decisions and practice. I have said that, whilst making an equal charge on all kinds of property under the Estate Duty, we accommodate the method of collection and payment to the different conditions of various kinds of property. It would, obviously, be impossible to realise at once the capital value of landed property in like manner as in the case of Stocks or other personalty. We continue, therefore, the existing system of payment by instalments; but, in order that the ultimate payment may be the same as on other property, we charge interest on the money remaining due until the whole is discharged. These instalments will be a charge on the estate, and will not lapse with the death of the person primarily liable to pay them. In the case of settlement, when property is now settled by will, probate is charged once on the *corpus* of the property, and this payment covers all the limitations of the settlement. It is felt that it would not be fair to require a full payment on each devolution within the scope of the settlement when the beneficiary takes only limited interest, and thus treat a man with only a life interest on the same footing as one who had the absolute disposal of the estate. We now, therefore, propose to assimilate the treatment of property under all kinds of settlements to that now in force respecting settlements made by will. But, as the single payment in respect of the whole settlement may result in a diminished total produce of the tax, we propose to levy an additional 1 per cent on all property under settlement to recoup this loss. I have, in fact, adopted the right hon. Gentleman's policy. I have sat at his feet for some years, and have learned something from him. In this manner we levy the same amount from the estate as if it were left absolutely, but each beneficiary will contribute according to the extent of his interest by the reduction of his income resulting from the original diminution of the capital. In the case of realty, where the duty will be payable in the first instance by the life tenant, he will have the power to charge the amount of it on the property. I do not propose, at the present moment, to argue this question in detail. The proper time for that will be when the Resolution relating to the Death Duties comes separately under discussion. I have not found it necessary to go into any elaborate calculations, such as those which were discussed in the Debate of 1888, as to the relative amount of various kinds of property and the charges upon them. Our plan does not require any such calculation, because it is proposed to place exactly the same charge on every sort of property, of whatever kind it may be.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Will the right hon. Gentleman state the percentage?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am coming to that directly. I now come to a point in this matter which is of still greater importance. Hitherto I have discussed the propriety of bringing all kinds of property under the same tax—a tax in the nature of the present Probate Duty. This we have sought to accomplish.

When we have collected all the different heads of property passing at a man's death, and aggregated them in one sum, the question arises, shall the property be taxed at the same rate, whether it be great or small? Shall a property of £100,000 not contribute on a higher scale than a property of £1,000; a property of £500,000 more than £100,000; and £1,000,000 more than £500,000? This raises in its simplest form the vital question of graduated taxation. To my mind, the principle if applied with fairness and justice is a most equitable and politic principle. Every writer on political economy and finance has laid down the doctrine that taxation should be proportionate to the ability to bear it of those on whom it is imposed. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) admitted, and indeed proclaimed, these principles when he established the Estate Duty. He stated—

> "On the whole, I think it will be generally recognised that it is the men whose fortunes are considerable who pay least in proportion to their aggregate income and property."

He proceeded to act to a limited extent on this principle by imposing the Estate Duty on estates amounting to £10,000, and excepting all estates below that sum. I pointed out at the time that this fact, and the principle upon which it was propounded, contained the germ of graduation. It was, in fact, the first rung of the ladder, and we propose to ascend the scale. I read last week a very able article in *The Economist* on this subject, which pointed out how this principle might be applied even on a small scale. Mr. Pitt suggested that a man who could afford to keep two carriages should be taxed on each a higher rate than his neighbour who could only afford to keep one. This system of graduation is in force in many of our colonies. In Victoria an estate of £10,000 to £20,000 pays 4 per cent., rising by steps to estates of £100,000, above which 10 per cent. is paid. We propose a much more moderate graduation, rising to 8 per cent. at £1,000,000, or double the existing maximum. I now propose to tell the Committee how I intend to fix the graduation. On estates exceeding £100 and not exceeding £500 the rate will be 1 per cent.; exceeding £500 and not exceeding £1,000, 2 per cent., including in both cases Legacy and Succession Duty; exceeding £1,000 and not exceeding £10,000, 3 per cent.; exceeding £10,000 and not exceeding £25,000, 4 per cent.; exceeding £25,000 and not exceeding £50,000, 4½ per cent.; exceeding £50,000 and not exceeding £75,000, 5 per cent.; exceeding £75,000 and not exceeding £100,000, 5½ per cent.; exceeding £100,000, and not exceeding £150,000, 6 per cent.; exceeding £150,000 and not exceeding £250,000, 6½ per cent.; exceeding £250,000 and not exceeding £500,000, 7 per cent.; exceeding £500,000 and not exceeding £1,000,000, 7½ per cent.; over £1,000,000, 8 per cent. Properties below £500 will pay 1 per cent. instead of a minimum of 2 per cent. on personalty and of 1½ per cent. on realty as at present, but they will be relieved from Legacy and Succession Duty, which, under the consanguinity scale, may now render such properties subject to a much higher charge. Properties between £500 and £1,000 will pay 2 per cent., but they will be similarly relieved from Legacy and Succession Duty. The 30s. payment below £300 gross will cease. Properties of capital value between £1,000 and £25,000 in free personalty will pay as they now do. It is above £25,000 that the new graduation will commence. There is one more point I must mention, and that is the existing mortgage to the Local Authorities of half the Probate Duties. I always strongly objected to that proceeding as hampering the Chancellor of the Exchequer and embarrassing the Imperial finance. These objections are emphasised by the actual situation. As the Probate Duty will be merged in the new Estate Duty, it is, of course, impossible to maintain this particular form of assignment. I cannot here undertake to reform the system, as I think it ought to be reformed altogether; but I propose, for the present, to continue it by an equivalent, which is calculated to bring about similar pecuniary results, through an arrangement which will secure to the Local Authorities out of the new Estate Duty the same contribution to which, under the law as it at present stands, they are now entitled. I will not go now into the details, which will be better understood when the Bill is presented. I have hitherto dealt only with the A class of duty, the class of which Probate Duty is the type, and which is charged on the *corpus* of estates, regardless of the interests of the beneficiaries, or their relationship to the deceased owner. I have yet to mention the changes which I propose to make in the B class of duty, the duty which falls upon the interest of the individual beneficiary, and is graduated according to the degree of his relationship to the person from whom he derives his interest. There are two duties of the B class—Legacy and Succession Duty. They always used to be—and now that the additional 1½ per cent. Succession Duty is to be swept away and the Succession Duty on lineals is merged in Estate Duty they once more will be—identical in respect of the rates of duty. The "consanguinity scale," as it is called, will be the same in either case. But, in order to make them identical, it is necessary to remove—and I propose to remove—the anomaly by which Succession Duty is in all cases, even where the successor takes an absolute interest, charged only on his life interest, and the further anomaly that Succession Duty is payable by instalments free of interest, whereas Legacy Duty is payable in one lump sum. In both these respects we propose to place Succession Duty on exactly the same footing as Legacy Duty. It will in future be charged upon the capital value of the property where the successor takes absolutely. Though still payable in instalments, these instalments will be charged with interest, thus rendering them really equivalent to the lump sum paid at once under Legacy Duty. With these changes Legacy and Succession Duties—though kept up nominally as separate duties for the sake of administrative convenience and on account of the body of law and legal decisions, which has grown up around them—will be identical in their incidence. There will, in fact, be only one B duty, equal in its incidence on all kinds of property, real and personal, settled and unsettled, just as there will be one A duty, the Estate Duty, instead of three, and that one duty likewise equal in its incidence all round. There will be two duties instead of five duties, and two equal duties in the place of the chaotic inequality of incidence which now prevails. I come now to the question of what the change is expected to bring in. The Estate Duty will take the place of the present Probate, Account, and Estate Duties, of the additional ½ and 1½ per cent. Succession Duty, and of the Succession Duty on lineals, diminishing the yield of Succession Duty by more than one-half. The portion which will remain will be to some extent augmented by the proposal to charge the duty on capital value and to charge interest where it is paid by instalments. As against this, however, there will be the loss of the Succession Duty on properties under £1,000, and there will be a small loss of Legacy Duty on the same account. It is difficult to ascertain the exact balance, but the result of the whole is that we estimate an ultimate increase upon the Death Duties of between £3,500,000 and £4,000,000. They will then amount to about £14,000,000, of which £2,500,000 goes to the local taxation account. What we shall gain will be about double the yield of Probate and Estate Duty to Imperial Revenue. The experience of the Succession Duty, which so largely disappointed the expectations formed of it, and which has not yet realised three-fourths of what was expected 40 years ago, teaches a lesson of caution and diffidence in prediction of the results of so great a change in which we have so little experience to guide us. Nevertheless, on the best calculations we can get, I estimate that we shall not in the long run fall short of an annual increase of £3,500,000. But only a small part of this increase will accrue to the benefit of the Exchequer in the present financial year. Supposing this Bill to become law by June 1, several months must elapse before the estates of persons dying after that date will be brought in for payment of duty. Thus we shall only have, say, seven months of the present year under the new system. During the first five months we shall be taking the existing duties. But even during those seven months we shall only be receiving the new duty on personalty. Realty being allowed to pay by instalments, the full increase under that head will take several years to realise. Taking all this into consideration, I cannot count for 1894-95 upon more than a net gain of £1,000,000 from the substitution of the new Estate Duty for the duties which it replaces. The yield may be somewhat greater, but it would not be safe to reckon on it. Up to this point I have only succeeded in providing £1,000,000 out of the additional £2,379,000 of which I am in need. The Committee will have anticipated that the aid of the Income Tax must be invoked. In the great naval and military scare some 35 years ago, when it was necessary to raise £5,000,000 within the year, the Income Tax was at once raised to 4d. in the £1—from 5d. to 9d.—and the whole was to be collected within six months. Do not let the Committee be too much alarmed. I have no such heroic proposal in store for them. The addition to the Income Tax I shall ask them to make is 1d. in the £1, from 7d. to 8d., which would yield in the present year £1,780,000. We must in any event have brought the Income Tax under review, because, as I stated last year, it is obviously just that if real property is to be assimilated in burden to personalty under the Death Duties it has a claim, which cannot be neglected, to be relieved from the exceptional charge which in most cases it bears under its assessment to the Income Tax. The fact that real estate is, as a general rule, in Great Britain, assessed upon its gross and not upon its net income, has long been a ground of complaint. It has been recognised by those who have considered the subject that the inequalities in the position of real estate must be dealt with together. We propose, therefore, that in future an allowance shall be made on the gross income as assessed under Schedule A. The question of what allowance shall be deducted from the gross income is one of considerable difficulty. We have taken the best means in our power to arrive at a fair conclusion on this matter. We cannot be guided by "rateable value," because not only do the deductions made from gross value, to arrive at "rateable," vary in different parts of the country, but the gross value as estimated for local purposes itself varies so much that, while in certain places it is the same as the Income Tax assessments, in other places it is much below it. But, at the same time, the deductions made to arrive at "rateable value" in these parts of the country, where local valuations are most careful and systematic, are some guide to us in determining what allowance should be made from the Schedule A assessment. Now, from a comparison of a number of such valuations, it appears that the allowance made on agricultural land, in respect of landlord's expenses, is generally 1-12th, in a few cases 1-10th. Mr. Hubbard's Committee of 1861 proposed those figures which have been adopted for the county rate in Lancashire, the West Riding, and Northamptonshire. We propose to take the more liberal view, and to allow, not 1-12th but 1-10th. In the case of houses where the burden of repairs falls on the landlord the allowance is commonly 15 per cent, or 16⅔ per cent., which is 1-6th, and it is this figure, 1-6th, which we propose to take. This allowance, based on these principles, will have to be deducted from the produce of the additional 1d. on the Income Tax. If 1-10th and 1-6th be taken, it will cost nearly £100,000 per penny in a full year. Therefore, the loss with an 8d. tax will be little short of £800,000. But this will not be fully felt in the first year. I may point out that this will constitute an immediate and annual relief to real property both in land and houses, and that it will be enjoyed before any additional burdens from the increased charges on the Death Duties are suffered. I am not sorry that in the present condition of the landed interest we should be able in this manner to afford them an immediate and sensible relief. It will be a boon to the living owner; the Death Duty will be a tax on his successor. This is the first large deduction which I have to make in reforming the Income Tax upon a more equitable footing. Now I come to a still more important matter from my point of view; and I shall be able to give the hon. Member for North Islington the information for which I have asked him to wait. But I have always felt—and I think it is a universal sentiment—that if the Income Tax is to be maintained at a high figure—and the present rate of your expenditure holds out little hope of its reduction—that we should make some attempt to adjust its pressure so as to make it less intolerable to those who are least able to bear it. Everybody must agree that the pressure of the Income Tax is most severe upon the class of men of small and very moderate incomes. At present the limit of total exemption is £150, which just fails to clear the man who earns £3 a week. Above that figure at present an abatement is allowed of £120 on incomes up to £400 a year. It has often been urged with absolute justice that it is the class with incomes under £400 or £500 who most deserve consideration and require relief. They are a large and most deserving class, mostly emerging into an independence they have earned for themselves, and rising by their own industry from the stratum of exemption to that of Income Tax-paying means. In raising the Income Tax to 8d. we are desirous that the extra burden shall not fall upon this class. This may be accomplished in a simple and easy manner by extending the principle of abatement. We propose that the abatement shall be £160 instead of £120 on incomes under £400, which will, of course, make the lower limit of exemption £160 instead of £150. We propose, further, to relieve incomes between £400 and £500 a year by an abatement of £100. This is a class which has hitherto borne the full burden of the tax. It may seem at first sight that this is a trifling measure of relief, but it affects a vast number of the Income Tax payers—over 500,000. The Committee will appreciate how great the relief is when I say that the extension of the abatement to £160 under £400 will cost £640,000, and the new abatement between £400 and £500 will cost £200,000 per annum, or £840,000 on a full year. The loss on these two deductions—namely, on Schedule A and abatements on incomes below £500—will amount to £1,450,000 in the current year, which will reduce the yield of the additional 1d. to £330,000. I should like to show the House exactly how this abatement will operate on the humbler classes. I have a table here which will show the exact character of the relief which it affords, and that the results of this change will be that no one with an income under £500 a year will pay more (but that, in fact, he will pay somewhat less) on an 8d. Income Tax than he does now when the Income Tax is at 7d. Incomes of £200 a year, with an 8d. tax (and an abatement of £160), will pay at the rate of 1 3-5d. in the £1, as against the rate of 2 4-5d. in the £1 paid last year, with a 7d. tax, and an abatement of £120. Incomes of £250 will pay at the rate of 2 4-5d. instead of 3 3-5d. in the £1; incomes of £300 will pay at the rate of 3 2-3d. instead of 4 1-5d. in the £1; incomes of £350 will pay at the rate of 4 1-3d. instead of 4 3-5d. in the £1; incomes of £400 will pay at the rate of 4 4-5d. instead of 4 9-10d. in the £1; incomes of £450 (with an abatement of £100) will pay at the rate of 6 2-9d. instead of 7d. in the £1; and incomes of £500 (with an abatement of £100) will pay at the rate of 6 2-5d. instead of 7d. in the £1. Therefore, on this graduated scale each man up to £500 pays less than he did last year with a 7d. Income Tax. I shall be asked the question, "If you graduate the Income Tax down on the lower scale, why not graduate it up on the larger incomes?" In principle there is nothing to be said against such a system; indeed, there is every argument in its favour. The difficulties which lie in the way are of an administrative and a practical nature, which, as yet, I have not been able to find means to overcome. The reason why it has been found possible to collect so vast a sum of money with such comparative facility has been that you collect the bulk of the Income Tax at its source, and from persons on whom the burden does not ultimately fall. The real Income Tax payer, like the landlord, is charged indirectly and by deduction. In the greater part of the collection (about three-fourths of the whole) it is simply automatic. There is no inquisitorial prying into the ways and means of each individual. You do not demand a sight of his cash-book and his pass-book, but the tax is deducted, in the majority of cases, from his income before it reaches him. Many people are in a happy ignorance of the Income Tax which they pay. I wish there were more of them. Even in the case of trades and professions where you require a declaration of a man's profits you do not attempt an investigation of the income the individual derives from other sources. I have made a careful investigation of this matter in consultation with the authorities of the Inland Revenue, and they are strongly of opinion that the measures of penal discovery and irritating inquisition which would be involved in any plan which required the determination of every man's income from all sources would render the collection of the Income Tax so odious as to imperil its existence, and in all probability make it impossible to maintain the tax. The graduated Estate Duty may be, in fact, reckoned in terms of an annual charge upon the estate; and in that shape may be regarded as a graduated Income Tax which is levied only upon realised property, and does not fall upon what are called "precarious" incomes. So that, in point of fact, you do arrive at the result which is aimed at in the demand for a graduated Income Tax falling upon what are called "spontaneous," as distinguished from "industrial," incomes. The proposals I have hitherto made are estimated to yield £1,330,000, but I have still upwards of £1,000,000 to provide. I propose to find the balance from an addition to the duties on spirits and beer—6d. a gallon upon spirits and 6d. a barrel upon beer. These are duties to which this House has always had recourse when it was necessary largely to increase the Revenue, and that not upon moral or social considerations, but upon purely fiscal grounds, which are those upon which alone a Chancellor of the Exchequer is entitled to proceed. Many years ago Mr. Gladstone stated that

> "The principle upon which the House of Commons has, I think, uniformly proceeded with respect to spirits has been not that we ought to lower the duties upon them as much as we can consistently with the interests of the Revenue, but that we ought to raise the duties upon them as much as we can consistently with the policy and necessity of preventing the growth of a contraband trade."

The right hon. Gentleman opposite acted on this principle in 1889 when he required an additional revenue for Imperial Defence purposes, and continued it as a substitute for the Wheel and Van Tax. The right hon. Gentleman then had no hesitation or difficulty in resorting to an increased duty on beer and spirits. The necessity under which we now find ourselves is of a far higher and more urgent character. I have taken much pains to inquire whether the trade in beer and spirits is capable of bearing increased burdens without oppression. I find that, while prices to the individual consumer have remained almost constant, the cost of materials, and therefore presumably of manufacture, has greatly and rapidly decreased. I have also means at my disposal for convincing myself of the great profits of these trades, both wholesale and retail, and their ability to bear additional burdens. I can, if I am challenged —which I do not expect to be—lay before the Committee some figures on this head which will surprise both them and the country. It is a tax which, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite pointed out, can hardly fall upon the individual consumer of a glass of spirits or a pot of beer. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, in the course of his Budget Speech in 1889, referring to his proposal to increase the duty upon beer, said—

> "In doing so I shall obtain the £300,000 which I want, while adding something perfectly imperceptible to the cost of a barrel of beer. The duty on beer is at present 2d. per gallon, and the addition proposed, if it could be thrown on the consumer, would only increase the cost of beer, on the average, by about 1-14th part of a penny per gallon. The fact is, the addition is so extremely small it will be felt in no quarter whatever. I beg the Committee to observe, therefore, that I am obtaining my revenue by an addition to the tax which cannot be felt by the consumer."

In respect of beer, the duty of 6d. a barrel could hardly be levied upon the quart pot, which would represent the 24th part of a penny. I hope, therefore, that we shall not be told that this is a proposal to "rob a poor man of his beer." It is, in fact, a tax on large and growing profits. It is notorious that this trade is falling more and more into fewer hands, with greater capital, and improved methods of economical manufacture, which leave a larger margin of profit than was attainable formerly by the smaller brewers. The case of spirits stands on very much the same footing. A gallon represents six reputed quart bottles of proof spirit, but, in point of fact, at the strength below proof at which spirits are usually sold it would represent eight bottles. If the spirits were equal to proof the additional tax would amount to 1d. a bottle. The real incidence of the tax will not be above ¾d. per bottle. I find that, when the right hon. Gentleman opposite a few years ago imposed a similar addition, 1d. per bottle was imposed by some classes of vendors, but some of the greatest traders never altered their prices at all. It seems obvious that if the consumer had to pay 1d. per bottle more it would be impossible to charge the fraction of the 1d. upon those who invest only in the glass or the quartern. In this matter enlightenment and advice have come to me from an unexpected quarter. I find from *The Morning Advertiser* of April 7 of the present year that the third annual dinner of the Winchester and District Licensed Victuallers' Society was held at the George Hotel. All the proper people were there. There was the Mayor, Alderman T. Stopher, who presided, and the Member for the city was present, and Mr. Riach, the agent of

"The National Trade Defence Fund," and members of the trade from various places within the Society's district. Mr. Riach was good enough to make a Budget for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That gentleman said that, as to the Budget proposals, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised the tax on beer only from 6s. 3d. to 7s. it would produce £1,100,000, which must come out of the pockets of brewers; a tax of 1s. on spirits he did not think, on the whole, would be undesirable, as it might be got back from the customer with very fair profit, but that would produce an additional revenue of £1,475,000, the two impositions providing rather more than half of the anticipated deficit. Thus did Daniel come to judgment. I am more moderate than the agent of the National Trade Fund. My estimated yield of this increased duty is—on spirits, £760,000, and, on beer, £580,000, making a total during the present year of £1,340,000, including Customs and Excise, and allowing for a certain falling-off in consumption. This added to the former figures will make up an estimated increase of Revenue of £2,670,000 from taxation. I have now nearly completed my task, but before I conclude I should like to place before the Committee a general review of the bearings and results of our proposals as a whole. Let me now finally review the proposals as a whole. I had to meet a deficit of £4,502,000. I have reduced this deficit by clearing the Revenue of the year from the charges arising out of recently contracted debts by £2,123,000, leaving a sum of £2,379,000 to be met by additional taxation. The additional taxation is thus distributed:—Estimated additional yield of the new Death Duties during the present year will be £1,000,000, the additional Beer and Spirit Duty will produce £1,340,000, and the additional 1d. on Income Tax will yield £1,780,000, making a total additional Revenue of £4,120,000. From these there has to be deducted, under the proposed abatements and allowances under Schedule A, a total of £1,450,000, giving a net additional Revenue of £2,670,000. Setting this against the deficit of £2,379,000, we have a surplus of £291,000 for the present year. The final balance sheet for the present year will, therefore, now stand as follows:—

REVENUE.

	£	£
1. Customs. Original Estimate	19,850,000	
Add additional Spirit Duties	160,000	
		20,010,000
2 Excise. Original Estimate...	25,060,000	
Add additional Beer and Spirit Duties ...	1,180,000	
		26,240,000
3. Stamps. Original Estimate...	13,080,000	
Add new Estate Duty	1,000,000	
		14,080,000
4. Land Tax and House Duty...		2,470,000
5. Income Tax. Original Estimate	15,200,000	
Add additional 1d. in the £1	1,780,000	
	16,980,000	
Deduct loss from reliefs	1,450,000	
		15,530,000
6. Post Office and Telegraphs		13,190,000
7. Crown Lands		420,000
8. Interest on Advances. Original Estimate ...	136,000	
Add Suez Canal Share dividends...	260,000	
		396,000
9. Miscellaneous Revenue. Original Estimate ...	1,550,000	
Add receipt from Naval Defence Account ...	289,000	
		1,839,000
Total Estimated Revenue...		£94,175,000

EXPENDITURE.

	£	£
1. Consolidated Fund Services.		
Original Estimate ...	28,082,000	
Deduct Naval Defence Fund Annuity ...	1,429,000	
		26,653,000
2. Supply Services.		
(1) Army. Original Estimate	18,081,000	
Deduct Interest on Imperial Defence Loan	70,000	
		18,011,000
(2) Navy. Original Estimate	17,366,000	
Deduct Interest on Naval Defence Loan	75,000	
		17,291,000
(3) Civil Services		18,688,000
(4) Customs and Inland Revenue		2,677,000
(5) Postal Services		10,564,000
Total Estimated Expenditure		93,884,000
Surplus or Margin		291,000
		£94,175,000

Let me now attempt briefly to review as a whole the plan I have endeavoured to lay before the Committee. I have been invited to introduce a partisan Budget. That is not my view of the duty of a Finance Minister in this country. The responsibility for the finances of an Empire like this is no light matter. The Minister is the trustee for every class and for every interest in the community. He has not the right to employ those powers to serve sectional or Party purposes. Where it is his happy fortune to relieve the burdens of the people, he is bound to distribute that relief with an impartial hand. Where it is his harder fate—as it is mine—to call upon the community for great sacrifices to support great national interests, it is his business to distribute the increased burden upon just principles, so that its weight may be endured by those who are best able to bear it. The guiding principle of taxation is that the liability should be imposed where it shall be least heavily felt. In that consists the whole science of equitable finance. Let me invite a candid examination by the Committee of the proposals of the Government, regarded from this point of view. We find ourselves called upon to raise £2,379,000 by extra taxation for the defence of the Empire. How is it to be raised, and how is the burden to be distributed? I will first regard the operation of our scheme upon the wage-earning class who, it will be admitted, have the smallest margin beyond that which is required for the necessities of life. No one will dispute that it is upon them the lightest part of the burden should weigh. I would point out that in our proposal, upon men earning less than £160 a year, or £3 a week, no additional taxation will be imposed except possibly 1d. upon a bottle of spirits. That is not a large contribution to ask of them for the national defence, and it is, at all events, a voluntary subscription. Upon a glass of spirits, or pot of beer, as I have pointed out, there will be no increase in price; it might be 1½d. on a nine-gallon cask of beer. That is the extent of the burden imposed upon the means of the great mass of the people who earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow. Ascending now to the next stratum—namely, the classes with incomes between £160 and £500 a year—I have already shown under the head of the Income Tax that the additional 1d. that we impose will not involve any increased burden upon them, but that, on the contrary, the augmentation of the allowance will place the numerous class between £160 and £500 a-year — a most deserving class, whose margin is very narrow — in a more favourable position than they now occupy with the Income Tax at 7d. Incomes above £500 a year will be called upon to pay an additional 1d. for national defence. The man with £1,000 will contribute £4 3s. 4d. more than he does now; the man of £5,000 a year will contribute a little more than £20; the man of £10,000 a year £40; and the man of £50,000 something above £200. So much for the Income Tax. As to Death Duties. Properties below £1,000 will, as I have already shown, pay less than they now do. Properties of the capital value of £25,000 in free personalty will pay upon no higher rate than they do at present—namely, 4 per cent. Realty and settled property will be placed upon an equal footing with unsettled personalty. They will lose, it is true, the advantage of the exemptions they now enjoy. That is a just and equitable provision which must have been made quite apart from the exigencies of increased taxation. As regards realty, it will have the compensation that the disadvantage which it suffers under Schedule A will be removed. That is an immediate and present gain to a distressed interest. The additional weight on realty from the estate duty belongs to the future. No increased taxation from this source will occur during the present year. It will accrue gradually and at intervals of time, and will always be proportionate to the actual value of the estate. You may take it generally that the period of a Death Duty extends over a generation of 30 years over which the burden is distributed. I venture to claim for this plan that it is a fair plan, conceived with a due regard to the interests of all and to the capacity of each class of the community to bear. You have to consider not only the objections to this plan and the taxes we propose, but you have to tell us what you are prepared to put in their place if you reject this plan. It is not a pleasant task for any Government to be called upon in any shape to add to the burdens of the people. No form of taxation can be otherwise than distasteful and unpopular to those on whom it must fall. You have voted your vast Estimates from a conviction that the expenditure was necessary and politic. If you have performed your duty in that respect you will not fail in the obligation to meet that charge. The House of Commons will never, I am persuaded, shrink from or refuse any effort which is necessary to sustain the honour and provide for the safety of the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Tea.

"That the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):—

Tea . . . the pound . . Four Pence.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): Following the example of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and other ex Chancellors of the Exchequer, I do not propose to review the long and interesting and very clear statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer this evening. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian has often suggested that when large proposals are placed before this House there is much disadvantage in discussing them on the First Reading; and, therefore, so far as I am myself concerned at all events, I do not propose to review the speech of the right hon. Gentleman now. If I were disposed to do so I think I should have some title, considering that about a quarter of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be made up of quotations from my own speeches. I regret, if I may say so, that the right hon. Gentleman accentuated so much the views of any single Member of this House, because the questions we have to discuss are far too large to allow of their developing into any kind of personal controversy between the right hon. Gentleman and myself. I hope that not only to-night but on future occasions I may be able to give to a great extent the go-by both to his ironical compliments and to his veiled attacks. There are two points to which I wish to call the attention of the House. The first is the remarkable contrast, the descent from the sublime heights that took place when the right hon. Gentleman, having spoken of the duty of the Committee as being not to borrow or to suspend the Sinking Fund but to pay their way, proceeded to suspend the new Sinking Fund, and to apply it to the payment of new debts instead of old debts. I do not object to the proceeding, but I think there was some surprise felt in the House even amongst his own supporters when the sublime appeal to virtue ended with such a plan as he has suggested. The other point to which I wish to call attention is this. What prospect does the right hon. Gentleman think there will be of passing this highly complicated and to a great extent controversial Budget during the time which he suggested himself? He made his Estimates as if the Act might be passed by June 1. Let me remind him that the right hon. Member for Midlothian always held that the regulation of the Death Duties would absorb an entire Session. These are the words which the right hon. Gentleman used in 1881 with reference to the Death Duties:—

"I am quite convinced that when such a plan" (that is, a complete plan, dealing with the Death Duties) "is proposed, it ought to be proposed by a Government to a Parliament which has plenty of what I may call elbow-room—plenty of free, unoccupied available space for its discussions."

I hope we shall find that there is plenty of elbow-room, plenty of time at our disposal for this discussion. And why? The right hon. Member for Midlothian said—

"Its application is such, the diversity and largeness of the interests are such, that it would never be got through except with a liberal allowance of the time of Parliament for its discussion."

Now we shall be invited to a discussion of the Death Duties, and we shall also be invited to a consideration and re-arrangement of some of the most important clauses of the Income Tax Act. I think we may promise that we will devote ourselves with industry to these tasks, but we trust the right hon. Gentleman will say that ample time will be given for the discussion of as complicated measures as have ever been submitted to Parliament. I should not like to sit down without echoing the compliments which the right hon. Gentleman has paid to the authorities of the Inland Revenue and of the Customs for the extreme precision of their Estimates in such a year as this. I also echo everything that was said by the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the proof of the solidity of the finance of this country and of its prosperity, which has been furnished by the figures which he has put before us. I am sure the House will feel that the right hon. Gentleman placed a very difficult Budget before us with great lucidity, and, on the whole, as much as was possible for him, with his love of controversy, in an uncontroversial spirit. He did not entirely discard controversy, and his speech was marked by more attacks upon his predecessors than is usual on such occasions. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I think so. I am sure hon. Members will feel that I am treating the matter with the utmost good humour. Every Member was not perhaps aware of the insidious and veiled attacks which the right hon. Gentleman was making upon me. But we shall cross swords with regard to these points on another occasion. There may be questions and discussion on minor points, but I think it would be premature to raise at this moment a discussion upon the larger proposals of the Budget.

Sir W. HARCOURT suggested that with reference to the Death Duties the course should be taken which was taken on the Succession Duties in 1853—namely, that there should be a separate discussion on that Resolution. With reference to the other Resolution, he hoped they would be allowed to be taken to-night. The course he indicated was taken in 1881 and 1885.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he had looked to the precedent to which the right hon. Member alluded. In those years the Death Duty was the only great change in the Budget, but on this occasion the Budget contained more controversial matters—for instance, there was the proposal as to dealing with the whole of the Income Tax. What he would suggest was that the discussion on the Death Duties should take place separately on the Resolution with regard to the Death Duties, and then that the other matters should be discussed on the Resolutions which referred to them. For instance, the Resolution connected with the Income Tax would form the subject of a separate discussion. He did not think they could consent to take the Resolution relating to the increase of the Income Tax to-night, nor was there any occasion to do so. That would be in accord with precedent. What the right hon. Gentleman might fairly expect was that the Resolution for the increase of taxation on Spirits and Beer should be taken, and then that the Resolution relating to the Death Duties should be made, as far as possible, a separate Resolution.

Sir W. HARCOURT observed, that certain of the Resolutions it was necessary should be taken, such as those relating to the duties on tea and spirits.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take the Resolution with regard to the Sinking Fund tonight? I cannot see that any advantage would be gained by it. There can be no haste.

Sir W. HARCOURT did not know that there was any particular haste. In postponing the Resolution as to the Death Duties, he was really departing from the ordinary precedent of the year 1881. In the year 1885, when Mr. Childers introduced a very elaborate Budget which dealt with Succession Duties, Beer Duties, and Spirit Duties, there was a whole list of Resolutions which were passed together, the right hon. Gentleman opposite urging on that occasion that it was very important the House should see the Bill.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, in his experience the Budget Resolutions were ordinarily postponed, only such being proceeded with as were necessary for the collection of the Revenue. In 1885 Mr. Childers circulated a Paper showing the effect of the collection of the Revenue before the Budget Bill was brought in, and showing the effects of the general changes which were made. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would furnish them with a statement which would put hon. Members in possession of the various changes, and of their financial effect. The statement made by the right hon. Gentleman was most clear. Still, if the figures were precisely put upon paper, hon. Members would be able to follow them more readily. In 1881 there were no changes in the Budget, except the Death Duties, and on that occasion only the formal Resolutions were taken. If the Resolution increasing the Income Tax were taken, it would not, he thought, be in accordance with precedence. He urged that they should have more time.

Mr. COURTNEY (Bodmin) thought that in late years the practice had been to pass the first Resolution, and the first only, and to defer the others till a later day. That, no doubt, was a departure from the practice which prevailed formerly, when all the Resolutions were passed; but the experience of recent years was so strong that he doubted if the right hon. Gentleman would be able to withstand following the more recent rather than the more ancient practice. He did not rise at all for the purpose of entering into a discussion of the policy or to deal with the particular proposals involved in the Budget which had been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman. It was always indiscreet to enter into such discussion immediately after a Budget speech, and it would be especially indiscreet on an occasion like this, with a Budget so complex, so intricate, and involving such far-reaching issues. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made an admiral speech, but he (Mr. Courtney) desired to ask one or two questions in order to elucidate certain points upon which he, at all events, had some doubt. With respect to the first part of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, he was very much possessed with admiration for the noble and lofty maxims which he enunciated with regard to the provision adopted for the redemption of the Debt. There had been some suggestions as to suspending these payments; and when the right hon. Gentleman, indulging in language of a very lofty strain, refused to entertain any suggestion for interfering with the redemption of the Debt, he was delighted with that sentiment, because he entirely sympathised and admired it; and if the right hon. Gentleman had carried out that determination to the end, he should have heartily approved of it. But instead of refusing to suspend the payment of the Debt, especially the old Debt, he had diverted from the old Debt £2,000,000, which were presently to be devoted to redemption. Would the right hon. Gentleman provide that that should be an absolutely temporary diversion of the New Sinking Fund for the purpose of the redemption of the balance in respect of the Naval Defence Act? The other point he was in doubt about referred to the Death Duties. As he understood it, the right hon. Gentleman proposed to establish in lieu of the Estate Duty, Probate Duty, and Account Duty, a single duty which was to be called the Estate Duty, which was to be levied upon the *corpus* of the estate devolved. Was it devised to one or more persons or was it devised in strict settlement? He wanted to know was this the meaning intended: Suppose a person devised an estate of considerable value—say, £500,000—in strict settlement, there would, upon his death and upon the first succession to the estate, be levied a contribution amounting to 7 per cent. upon the value of the estate, which would be paid by the person who succeeded as life tenant. Would the 7 per cent. on the £500,000 never be levied again until all the interests under the settlement were exhausted? The first person who paid the 7 per cent. as a capital sum would be entitled to charge it upon his successors, and it would pass on to the several persons who succeeded, but, as he understood it, there would be no levy again of a second duty until the whole of the interests under the settlement were exhausted. It was intended there should be one levy upon the commencement of the settlement, and until all the interests arising out of such settlement were exhausted there was not to be a removal of the charge.

Sir W. HARCOURT: There would be the additional 1 per cent.

Mr. COURTNEY said, that would come as the next point. Did he understand correctly that that would come in lieu of the present Succession Duty upon lineals? What he wished to know was whether the tenant for life who paid the 7 per cent. on the £500,000 would also pay 1 per cent.? He understood not. But, suppose that the person died without issue, and the property devolved to a nephew, in which case the rate would not be the same, the consanguinity being different, did the capital charge of 7 per cent. absorb all the interests or prevent a person coming in under the settlement of a different degree of relationship? He did not understand how the A duty was to work with the B duty, or how far the B duty survived the A duty levied in the circumstances he had suggested. He understood that the A duty absorbed all the duties to be paid by the lineal successors; but did it absorb all the duties to be paid by the collateral successors who came in under the settlement? This point was left obscure, and it would be useful if the right hon. Gentleman would make a statement which would remove a doubt on the subject. He did not in the least propose to enter into an examination of the policy of the proposals of his right hon. Friend. He would simply remark that they saw that the persons who were living, and who were voters, would gain relief, while the persons who were to succeed hereafter, and who might not be voters, would not get relief. He could not but admire the ingenuity of such an arrangement.

*Mr. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, if the right hon. Gentleman would allow him to do so, he would offer his tribute of admiration also to the extraordinarily clear manner in which he had presented matters which were somewhat complicated. But he regarded it as remarkable that one who had always prided himself as being a financial puritan should, in this electioneering Budget, as it might fairly be called, have violated one of those canons which he himself used for electioneering purposes when he was in Opposition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, described the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman as being a diversion of the New Sinking Fund in order to extinguish an old debt, but the right hon. Gentleman seemed to have appropriated £1,600,000 in order to pay off liabilities amounting to £1,400,000. The Committee must have heard with great satisfaction what the right hon. Gentleman said as to the accumulations in the Post Office Savings Bank as the result of the Act passed last year. So far as he knew, that increased deposit by the artizan classes had not been attracted by the Post Office by any diminution of deposits in the great joint-stock and private banks of investment throughout the country. It was clear that the classes who put their money in the Post Office Savings Bank were not the classes who deposited their money with the joint-stock and private banks, and it was satisfactory to see that the legislation of last year had not interfered with the legitimate banking operations of the country, but had probably attracted to the citadel of the Post Office Savings Bank money which might have been placed in much less secure positions. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to give the assurance that the New Sinking Fund would be applied to no purpose other than that mentioned in the Statement which he had circulated—namely, to the Naval Defence Fund; that was to say, the sum of £1,429,000.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) said, in common with all the hon. Members who had spoken, he felt thoroughly impressed with the greatness of the Budget. The one thing in it which he admired more than anything else was the establishment of the principle of graduated taxation, and he believed the Budget would mark an era. He also tendered thanks to the right hon. Gentleman for the marvellous lucidity with which this great and difficult subject had been expounded. His proposals would be welcomed by all financial and social reformers throughout the country. So high did he estimate the powers of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he had thought he might be capable of swallowing not only the deficit on the year, but the relinquishment of the Tea Duty in addition, so that the people might have had a free breakfast table, and that might have been done by still further increasing the Death Duty scale. So wrong did he regard it for anyone to leave £1,000,000 behind him that he thought he might be taxed at 50 per cent. He had no desire, however, to quarrel with the principle, because he thought it would turn out to be a valuable one. The principle of graduated taxation might be applied hereafter in various other directions, and, if so, he did not think they had to look forward very far to the time when the same Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able by means of this new principle to provide ample means of carrying on the Government while the poor people's breakfast table was set entirely free.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said, he had no wish to criticise the statements of the right hon. Gentleman, but he desired to ask for an explanation upon one matter—whether, in the event of a man leaving an estate consisting of £100,000 in value, of which £50,000 was settled land and £50,000 personalty, he would pay half the duty on settled land and half on personalty? The right hon. Gentleman would see the point, for he had himself said it would make a considerable difference. To what extent would the £4,000,000 which he expected to get from these new Estate Duties fall upon land? If the charge would not necessarily fall upon land the position would be altered.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had paid a just tribute to the heads of the Treasury for the care and accuracy with which these Estimates were prepared. Perhaps he might specially mention Sir R. Welby, the permanent head of the Treasury, who, he believed, was on that very day retiring from the Service. The Chancellor of the Exchequer congratulated himself on the large increase in the Savings Banks deposits. He wished he could think that this might be taken as evidence of increased prosperity on the part of the working classes, but he feared it was to a great extent due to the fact that the rate of interest allowed was higher than usual in relation to that obtainable at present elsewhere. He was glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman was able to reduce the amount of the Unfunded Debt—a wise and prudent course —and it was to be hoped he would be able to still further reduce the amount in the coming year. He greatly regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to find £2,000,000 of his deficiency by diminishing the amount applicable to the reduction of Debt. In Opposition the right hon. Gentleman continually attacked the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's for having diverted £2,000,000 of the Sinking Fund, and yet he was now doing the same thing himself. As regarded the Death Duties, he would not now discuss the proposals of graduation, but some explanation would be advisable, as several hon. Gentlemen near him did not understand how the Legacy Duties would stand. He understood that no change was made, but perhaps the Chancellor would give some explanation on this point. With respect to the Income Tax, he referred to the hardship with which it bore on industrial incomes. At present incomes were assessed on the average of three years, and if the income fell the tax was still levied on the same amount, though it had never been received. Formerly rebate was allowed, and he thought it would be only just to revert to the old system. He proposed to put down an Amendment to this effect when the Bill got into Committee. He was surprised to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that the profits of brewing were in fewer hands than formerly. The very reverse was the case. Many of the great brewing firms throughout the country had been turned into Joint Stock Companies, and the shares, instead of being divided among a few partners as was the case a few years ago, were now parcelled out among an immense number of small holders, who thus derived the profits from brewing. There was always a considerable amount of public feeling against the Income Tax, which made it difficult to defend and maintain. A national feeling existed that its incidence was unjust, and he would urge again upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the desirability of considering in Committee the points he had raised.

Sir A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, whatever might be the views of the House as to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals—and to express them would be premature—nobody could fail to admire the ability and lucidity of his statement. It must be apparent to everyone that the difficulties the right hon. Gentlemen had to contend with were owing principally to the expenditure that had been undertaken in connection with the national defence. The nation, however, would not begrudge him the money necessary for this purpose, because it was recognised as really an insurance payment for the protection of the trade and prosperity of the nation. With respect to the excise on spirits, he might direct the attention of the Committee to a fact worth noting. There could be little doubt that the extent of the consumption of alcohol was an indication of the state of trade in the country, and the official statistics showed there had been a considerable increase in the consumption of alcoholic liquors. He agreed with the criticism that had been passed on the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in availing himself of the Sinking Fund in order to meet the demands upon him. He certainly understood that the right hon. Gentleman had protested loudly against any such course, but his practice was quite the contrary. As to the Trustee Savings Banks, the right hon. Gentleman did not say whether they were also favourably affected in regard to the enlargement of the limit of deposits.

Sir W. HARCOURT: To a certain extent.

Sir A. ROLLIT was glad to hear it, because, although there had been some cases of criticism in connection with those banks, he was happy to state that he believed they were generally sound. The country owed a great obligation to the voluntary trustees for the interest they had taken in the welfare of the banks, which had undoubtedly done much to encourage thrift among the poorer classes. He could not agree with the criticism of the right hon. Baronet opposite, that these institutions ministered to a class for which they were not intended, and interfered with the interests of the private banks. They heard that sort of criticism frequently applied to Free Libraries and other such institutions which he was satisfied were doing real service to the working classes. He was glad to hear the admission from one of his hon. Friends who preceded him in the discussion that the Post Office banks, so far from conflicting with the interest of private banks, really increased the resources of those banks by in time, through the thrift they encouraged, transforming the small trader into the large trader. He was satisfied that the private banks of the country could not minister, at least in their early stages, to the class of small accumulators who used the Post Office Savings Banks. He believed the banks were a great benefit to the people, and he was glad that the increase in the deposits allowed had led to good results. In the Act there was an automatic provision for the investment of savings and interest in Stock; but it was not used so generally as one would wish. He thought the funds of the country were a reservoir into which the savings of the poor might be largely diverted, with the result that they would have, as in France, a larger class having a distinct interest in the welfare of the country and closely identified with its institutions. He hoped that that provision would be extended. The existing machinery was not the best for the purpose; it was too complicated; it was not understood even by the managers of the banks, much less by the poor investors, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would undoubtedly do an additional service if he increased the facilities for this investment. There was one provision in the Act of 1890 with which he did not agree. That was the provision with regard to surplus investments, which he thought complicated and restricted. He wished that those who invested largely in local securities of the best character should have further facilities for that purpose. With regard to the remission of Death Duties, he would only remark that the lawyers in this lawyer-ridden country, to use the Chancellor of the Exchequer's words—if no other class be—would be greatly gratified by the removal of anomalies and the simplification and abolition of some of the complexities in relation to the Death Duties. He thought also some of the readjustments commended themselves, whilst as to the system of graduation it had been his duty to sign the Memorial to the Chancellor of the Exchequer presented by the Chamber of Commerce, which consisted largely of the capitalist class; but yet the sense was almost universal that some system of gradation was to be recommended. He believed, therefore, that this was a move in the right direction, and, assuming the principle to be conceded, the scale appeared to be moderate, though perhaps it was considered too moderate in some quarters of the House. The deductions under Schedule A, though not great, were inevitable upon logical and just principles, and he was glad they had been made, especially as they affected the incomes of a class on whom the Income Tax pressed very heavily. He thought the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was very clear and able, and that the right hon. Gentleman was to be heartily congratulated upon it.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir J. Rigby, Forfar) said, that the right hon. Member for Bodmin had asked a question as to the working out of the principle expounded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the case of a property settled on the father for life, which afterwards passed over to the son, and was then diverted to a nephew. He would assume that the right hon. Gentleman was dealing with a case where the settlement was made by the father or by some ancestor. In that case, on the death of the father, the first tenant for life, this Estate Duty would become payable, and would be graduated according to the amount of the property comprised in the settlement. That would be the only time upon which a distinct duty would be charged upon the property so long as it remained in settlement. On the successive deaths there was no new charge of the Estate Duty beyond the additional 1 per cent. which was imposed upon settled property. In the case suggested, the Succession Duty being payable by the lineal descendant, it would be merged in the Estate Duty. Supposing the property afterwards passed to a nephew, he would be the last partaker under the settlement, and upon his death they would start again and charge the Estate Duty. With reference to him, as he came in under the settlement, there would be no new Estate Duty chargeable; but the Succession Duty would be chargeable in full; that was to say, the same Succession Duty as was now payable, the difference being that if he succeeded to the estate in fee simple he would be charged according to the principal value of the property. The Member for Guildford also asked a question as to whether, in the case of a property of £100,000, one-half composed of personalty and the other of realty, the one-half of the Estate Duty that was to be charged on the realty would fall upon the personalty exclusively, or was it to be charged upon realty. As he understood it, one-half certainly fell on realty.

Sir J. GORST said, he would like to ask a question on a point which was not clear. Take the case of a settlor who was dead long before the passing of this Act; a tenant for life was in possession of that property under the settlement, and he died. Would any Estate Duty be paid upon the death of that tenant for life?

Sir J. RIGBY said, the principle covered that case also. Upon the death of the tenant for life there was a devolution or passing of the property, and upon that devolution Estate Duty became payable.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, he did not intend on that occasion to refer to all the new proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but there was one proposal at least to which he, as an Irish Nationalist Representative, desired to draw attention at the earliest possible moment for the purpose of condemning it. No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a very difficult task in striving to provide for a very large deficit in the Budget of the year; but he thought that on several grounds the very last expedient to which the right hon. Gentleman ought to have resorted for the purpose of making up the deficit was to further increase the inequality of taxation between Ireland and Great Britain. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might have covered the deficit by not allowing the abatements in the Income Tax, or by not making such fine gradations between the different classes of income to be affected by the Death Duties. But the right hon. Gentleman had resorted to the one expedient always resorted to by British Ministers when they found themselves in a financial difficulty—he had resorted to the Whiskey Duty. This course began in the year 1852, when the effect of the increase on the Spirit Duties was to increase the taxation of Ireland by 52 per cent., whereas the increase in the taxation of Great Britain during the same period was only about 18 per cent. The process was continued in several years subsequently, and at last, in 1885, a proposal to further increase the Spirit Duty by 2d. in the gallon led to the ejection of the Liberal Government of the day from Office by the Irish vote. The proposal now was to increase the duty not by 2d., but by 6d. It was said that they did not treat Ireland unjustly when they taxed spirits in Great Britain and Ireland at the same rate. The Irish Representatives had over and over again pointed out the fallacy of that argument. The National beverage—he did not like the phrase, but used it for want of a better one—was whiskey in Ireland and beer in Great Britain; and, therefore, although they put the same tax on whiskey throughout the Kingdom, it fell heavily on Ireland, because more whiskey was consumed there in proportion to the population than was drunk in England. That was the foundation of the complaints which the Irish Members had made from time to time as to the injustice of this financial burden imposed on Ireland. For a long time it had been contended that there was no injustice to Ireland at all in this continual increase in the Whiskey Duty. In 1852 and for several years subsequently the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had steadily defended this increase. However, in 1886, and again last year, the right hon. Gentleman had admitted that Ireland during all those years had suffered great financial injustice—in fact, he believed the right hon. Gentleman had said "shameful financial injustice"—and he could not have based that criticism on any other ground but on the continual increase of the Whiskey Duty. It was, therefore, extraordinary, after those admissions of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, to find the Chancellor of the Exchequer actually proposing not to reduce but to further increase the financial burden of Ireland. The time, too, was very unfortunate. Last year the Government, through the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, consented to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the financial relations between Ireland and Great Britain. The assumption was that there was an Irish financial grievance to be redressed; and yet, before a single investigation by that Commission had taken place, they had the Chancellor of the Exchequer prejudging the question by actually adding to the burden of the taxation of Ireland. He looked upon the proposal to add 6d. a gallon to the duty on whiskey, and only 6d. a barrel to the duty on beer, as a further piece of plunder applied to Ireland, and he therefore could never give his consent to it.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am sure the hon. Member knows perfectly well that the consumption of alcoholic liquors in England per head of the population is higher than that of Ireland, and higher in Scotland than in England. The figures, roughly speaking, are these:—16s. per head in England; 19s. per head in Scotland; and 13s. per head in Ireland. In fixing the duties as I have done I had in view the complaints made two years ago as to the unfairness, as between different parts of the country, of putting a duty of 6d. on whiskey and only 3d. on beer, and to that extent I redressed the inequality which exists as between the Spirit Duty and the Beer Duty. I was quite prepared, however, to hear there would be complaints on this matter, and I must endeavour to deal with them at the proper time. With regard to coinage, about which I have been asked a question by an hon. Gentleman opposite, I have to say that the original estimate of light gold was £43,000,000. There is already received at the Mint £23,400,000, of which £5,400,000 was received in the year 1893-94. The total deficiency of weight, up to the present time, has cost £382,000, of which £83,500 is due to the year 1893-94. The total number of sovereigns sent in from the commencement of the operation has been 14,000,000, and the value of half-sovereigns £9,500,000. The loss, per 1,000 sovereigns, has been £11. The loss, per £1,000 worth of half-sovereigns, has been £24·1. The withdrawals are proceeding at a much slower rate. In 1893-94 the average weekly withdrawals were less than a third of those in 1892-93. The average loss on each piece is also considerably less since the beginning of the year 1894, especially on the half-sovereign. Loss on whole period:—2·651d. on sovereigns; 2·891d. on half sovereigns. Loss in early months of 1894:—2·605d. on sovereigns; 2·548d. on half-sovereigns. There is a balance still left of the original fund of £53,500 available for the year 1894-95.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that the Permanent Debt Fund was a great resource and a great reserve; that it was our war chest, and that no diversion from it would be made to meet the deficit. And yet after that statement the right hon. Gentleman laid his hands on over £2,000,000 which would otherwise have gone to the reduction of the Permanent Debt.

Sir W. HARCOURT was understood to dissent from this statement.

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, it was plain that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had diminished by £2,000,000 the amount that would have gone to pay the Debt, old or new. The right hon. Gentleman would have had to find £2,000,000 from Revenue had he not laid hands on £2,000,000 which he ought to have applied to the reduction of the Debt. He confessed that after that proposal he heard with astonishment the right hon. Gentleman's talk about the sacrifices which our fathers had made. The sacrifice which our fathers made was to impose taxation upon themselves. The sacrifice which their son, in the person of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, made was to take money intended for the reduction of the Debt and use it for the payment of expenses. That was not a good way to follow the example of our fathers. With regard to the Death Duties, he understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Legacy and Succession Duties were to remain at the same rates as at present, and to be collected in the same way, but in addition to the Estate Duty. From what the Solicitor General said, however, it seemed that these were not to be in addition to the Estate Duty. The most marked feature of the Budget was that it was a Budget for taxing the rich in order to relieve the poor. How was that justified? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that the rich were getting poorer and the poor were getting richer. He said that trade showed a progressive decline, and if there was a progressive decline in trade the trader must be a sufferer.

Sir W. HARCOURT denied that he had stated that there was a progressive decline in trade.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, he had taken down the right hon. Gentleman's words, and he would appeal to to-morrow morning's papers to prove the accuracy of his note. In the meantime, if the right hon. Gentleman denied the accuracy of his quotation, he would withdraw it. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the articles of consumption by the wealthier classes, such as wine, were decreasing, and that seemed to show that the wealthy classes were getting less wealthy. For instance, the tobacco revenue was decreasing, as also was the Stamp Revenue for business stamps. Then the right hon. Gentleman told them that there was no sign of diminution in the power of the wage-earning class to buy the commodities they needed, and no sign even of pinching. That made good the assumption that the rich were getting poorer and the poor richer. Nevertheless, what did the right hon. Gentleman do? He put the whole of the new taxation on the rich. Not only did he refrain from putting a halfpenny of new taxes, directly or indirectly, upon the poor, but, of *malice prepense*, he increased the Income Tax of the relatively rich, not because he meant to keep it or wanted it for revenue, but in order to relieve the relatively poor. The right hon. Gentleman might have put the 1d. on the Income Tax in the usual way, squaring up the account in a handsome, simple, and comprehensible manner; but he put it on in one quarter so as to relieve the lower order of Income Taxpayers. He might have left the Income Tax alone, seeing that there was no gain to the Exchequer by the operation. The right hon. Gentleman was simply endeavouring to frame a popular Budget. He (Mr. Bowles) did not wish to see a large burden put upon the poor, but he agreed with the excellent moral apothegm of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that—

> "A good system of taxation was that the burden should be imposed where it would be least felt."

Where it would be least felt just now, according to the right Gentleman, would be amongst the poorer classes, whilst amongst the richer classes—who, as they all knew, had fallen away from the Government—it would be most felt. With regard to the Death Duties, no doubt justice required that when a man became possessed of an estate in fee he should pay duty on the capital value of it as a man who became the possessor of a similar sum in cash; but there was this difficulty, which had always hitherto been recognised, that in the case of £1,000 left to a man, if the State wished to take £10 per cent. of it, it could take £100, leaving the owner £900; but in the case of 1,000 acres of land left to a man the State did not take 100 acres, but required him to raise a mortgage (which was a difficult thing to do) and to pay in golden sovereigns. He maintained that the right hon. Gentleman was adopting not an equal treatment, but a differential treatment as to land. He had only risen to show how little he understood the Budget, and to ask for an explanation which would be useful to himself and to other hon. Members.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said, that so little time had passed since they heard the Budget proposals made that they were hardly able to go into details as yet, or even to discuss the principles laid before them. But some points had struck him, and he should like to make some remarks on a few of them. He did not altogether approve of the way the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to pay for the naval debt. He did not want to say anything about the Death Duties. It was not a subject which concerned the class of people he represented there, but had relation to those who were interested in real property rather than those who represented a purely business community. With regard to the Income Tax, although he naturally objected to the extra penny, he supposed it could not be avoided. If it was necessary to increase that tax it was satisfactory to know that most of the money that would be raised would come back to the class of people of small incomes, who needed every indulgence that could be extended to them by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The working classes did not pay any Income Tax, but there was a large class of clerks and professional men, and the poorer class of the clergy, whose income, although nominally above that of the working man, had so many calls upon it that, strictly speaking, he believed they were actually poorer than working-men; and anything that could be done to lighten the burden upon them was a step entirely in the right direction. The next way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to raise money was by increasing the duty on spirits and beer. The duty which was to be levied on Irish spirits was a matter which certainly concerned him as much as the hon. Member for North Dublin. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had explained to them that the duty was so small that it could not touch the consumer. The manufacture of whisky was one of the few manufactures that still flourished in Ireland, and any extra taxation would tend to interfere with and diminish the industry. The consumption in Ireland, too, was one of whisky and not beer, but apart from that he considered that Ireland already paid its fair share of taxation. It was certain that the tax would act adversely on the trade in Ireland. But even in that case, if it was absolutely necessary that taxation of the kind should be imposed, it must of course be borne. Why, if it was necessary to raise revenue by imposing this fresh tax, why was it not imposed in the case of foreign spirits also?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): That is the case. A Resolution to that effect will be proposed.

MR. WOLFF: I did not take it to be so from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes, a Resolution will be proposed for the imposition of a similar tax on foreign spirits.

MR. WOLFF said, he was glad to hear this, because it had seemed to him a strange thing that foreign spirits should be exempted. If that were the case, no doubt a considerable revenue would be produced, and possibly the duty on Scotch and Irish whisky might hereafter be reduced.

MR. EVERSHED (Staffordshire, Burton) said, there were so many points of the Budget with which he sympathised that it was with considerable regret that he had to offer some criticisms upon the provision for increased taxation of beer. He hoped, before this Resolution was passed, they would have some information as to whether it was intended to make this increased tax permanent. He knew nothing about spirits, but he did want to get at this information in reference to beer. He assumed that but for the considerable expenditure on the Navy, no increased tax on spirits or beer or any increase of the Income Tax would have been necessary. What he would like to hear was whether they were to regard this tax on beer as a temporary tax for a year or as a permanent measure? He should like an answer to that question, and he was bound to say it would materially influence the view he should take upon it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of the profits of brewers as being of a very extraordinary nature, and indicated that he could if he would divulge some figures that would astonish the House. He ventured to say there was nothing extraordinary about the profits of brewers. It happened that the greater part of the brewing trade was carried on by Public Companies. Their operations were the subject of annual balance-sheets which were made public, and it was perfectly well-known that the ordinary profits of the brewing trade were very moderate. He did not know whether any of those gentlemen who represented more particularly the barley growers of this country would have a word to say about this imposition of practically 2s. a quarter on barley. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might say this was a very small impost, which would not diminish the price of barley. But it might as well be said that if you did away with beer-drinking altogether you would not diminish the price of barley. He thought the impost was one which must be very unwelcome to the barley growers of this country. They were told that the working man would not be hurt by this tax. He ventured to think that the working men would take a very different view—namely, that if there were no tax they would get more or better beer for their money. He noticed with regret that, while in this extremely ingenious Budget spirits were taxed and a considerable increased duty laid upon beer, which was the beverage of the poor man, wine, which was the luxury of the rich, was left untouched.

Mr. MONEY WIGRAM (Essex, Romford) said, he would not detain the Committee upon the particulars of the Budget except so far as it affected the brewing trade, of which he had the honour to be a member, because he was aware tney would have an opportunity later on of discussing these questions. He must say he listened with some apprehension to the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He understood from them that the interest of their trade was not of much importance to him, and it was therefore with some sense of satisfaction that he found the right hon. Gentleman, when in want of help, turning first of all to their particular trade to get out of his difficulty. The trade was being bled to death for the benefit of the country; but he saw at least a short renewal of their lease of life in the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer considered the trade to be of financial use to the country. The point to which he wished to call attention was the proposition that this tax of 6d. a barrel should fall upon the manufacturers. Their view was that the time had gone by when it was possible for the manufacturers to pay increased taxation—which must in the end fall upon the consumer. When, in 1880, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian repealed what was then known as the Malt Tax, but which was in reality a tax upon barley, he explained that although he was only repealing one tax and imposing an equivalent tax, he expected to get a small sum for the Exchequer out of the difference in the rate of exchange. It was pointed out to him that the new tax would place upon them an additional duty of no less than 2s. a quarter over the old tax—a duty equivalent to 24s. of the old Malt Tax. They must now add the 3d. a barrel extra imposed in 1889 and retained in 1890, which made an additional 3s. to what was paid under the old Malt Tax, together with the present addition of 2s. per quarter—making in all 5s. more than they used to pay. He contended that when in 1885 Mr. Childers brought his Budget before the House it was shown to him most clearly that the increase of taxation already made had fallen most heavily upon the agricultural interest of the country; and they maintained that if this new tax was imposed, it must in the end fall upon the producer and the consumer in the shape of increased price or an inferior article. He hoped the Committee would take the view adopted in 1885, and refuse to increase taxation, which must eventually fall upon the producer or consumer.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he wished to ask a question or two of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was bound to say, with regard to the interesting speech they had just heard, that he must congratulate the hon. Member on his maiden effort; but he must point out that the only way in which the difficulty could be got over and this tax got rid of was to stop drinking beer altogether. No spirits or beer were required by anyone. There was not a doctor who would not tell them that a man was better without it. Still, if they wanted to levy an extra tax it was better to put it on the luxuries of life than the necessaries. Some people denied that, but they could not prove that spirits and beer were a necessity. All the doctors would tell them they did not require them. So far as he was concerned, he objected to this Navy business altogether, because undoubtedly the scare was got up by the Conservative Party for the purpose of taking attention away from reforms, and especially from Home Rule. [*Laughter.*]

Hon. Gentleman might laugh, but they knew it was a scare which had been tried before, and which was too often successful. He was sorry that the Government and the majority of the Liberal Party had given way to that scare. The consequence was, that they had now to find this large sum of money, and no doubt they would have another scare next year, because, of course, as a result of what we were doing, France and Russia would go on building more ships. Instead of building ships, he should like to see a Liberal Government proposing arbitration with a view of settling difficulties and keeping peace. He thought he might congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not only upon the clear statement he had made, but also upon the fact that he had introduced a Budget which went a fair way to putting the Death Duties upon an equitable basis. He admitted he should like to have seen the Chancellor go further in the way of graduating the Income Tax, while admitting what he had said as to the difficulty of carrying it out; but they were, at any rate, right in thanking him for what he had done, because his proposals would relieve those with small and precarious incomes who had a difficulty in making both ends meet. An hon. Gentleman said just now that the working man would object to this tax on beer, and the hon. Member for Belfast said that the working man did not pay Income Tax. So far as the calculations of experts had gone, they went to show conclusively that the working man paid a very large share of the Imperial taxes—a larger share than any other class of people in this country. [Sir W. Harcourt: Hear, hear!] He was glad to see that the Chancellor of the Exchequer acknowledged that. It was wrong to suppose that working men did not pay Income Tax, or contribute a fair share towards the Imperial taxation of the country. With regard to the working man suffering by the tax on beer, it had been said that he would have to put up with an inferior article. He was sorry the Government had not brought in an Adulteration Bill. It had been told him by experts that a good and effective Adulteration Bill would close half the public-houses in the country.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, that convictions for watering beer could be had, and the Inland Revenue was constantly inquiring into complaints made.

Mr. A. C. MORTON was very sorry to say that the existing Act was not very effective. It was a delusion and a snare, and prevented the Local Authorities from making use of their own powers against adulteration. Beer was already adulterated, and an hon. Gentleman had told them that, in consequence of this new tax, it was to be further adulterated.

Mr. EVERSHED: What I said was, that the working man might get inferior beer.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, he should agree with his hon. Friend if more water was to be put into the beer. According to his view, it would be all the better beer on that account. But he understood that what was meant by inferior beer was adulterated beer. He wanted now to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer two questions. The first was with reference to the importation of methylated spirits. He was told that this seriously interfered with the makers of methylated spirits in this country, because they could get no drawback. His second question had reference to the assessment of the Property Tax and House Duty. He was glad to know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had dealt with one portion of the question—that was to say, he was going to make an allowance so far as the Property Tax was concerned. Was he going to make an allowance in regard to the House Duty also? It had always been held that the gross value was an unfair value, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that in future he would levy the charge upon the rateable value. If it was fair to make the allowance upon the Property Tax, it must be fair to make it also in regard to the House Duty. He understood his right hon. Friend did not mean to take it off the House Duty this year, and so they would have something more to ask for next year. So far as the Property Tax was concerned, they might thank him for having done justice in that direction. They had been told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the additional 6d. per gallon upon spirits would not make any difference to the retail buyer. That might be correct, but the retail buyers would find more water in their whiskey.

The result of that would be that a whiskey drinker, finding his spirit watered, would have to buy two glasses where he only bought one now. No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer would profit by that, but he was not sure it was a safe way to obtain increased revenue. On the whole, he thought they might congratulate the Government upon what would undoubtedly be a popular Budget, and one which was fair towards all classes in the country. It might take some trouble to get it through the House, but the Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer might rely upon being backed up outside the House.

Mr. USBORNE (Essex, Chelmsford) said, with reference to the adulteration of beer spoken of so much by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, he must say he did not believe in it. The hon. Gentleman who had spoken of inferior beer did not mean that it was adulterated, but that more water was likely to find its way into it. He (Mr. Usborne) affirmed that this duty was the old Malt Duty, and would be more disadvantageous to the English farmer than the former duty. It was a tax upon barley according to yield. The alteration which was made some time since was a serious blow to the English farmer. What he wanted to press upon the House was, that this was not a duty of 6s. 3d. per barrel on beer, but a tax of 6s. 3d. on each two bushels of barley yielded. He spoke as representing an agricultural constituency, and asked the Chancellor to do what he could to help the farmer. He could not ask the Government to do much to relieve the grievances of the farmers, because he believed himself that protection was a political impossibility and bimetallism an absolute one. At the same time, while he could not seek for help in this direction, he could, at all events, ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to do the farmers more harm by proposals of this kind. He now came to the point who was to pay the tax. It had always been held by hon. Gentlemen opposite that the consumer paid, but the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer now said, "I have raised the tax so slightly that it will not be felt on the glass of beer." He (Mr. Usborne) felt that that was the case. Competition compelled the brewers to use the pump as little as possible, but, undoubtedly, if the brewers were to make the profits they had made in times gone by, something would have to be done. If hon. Members would glance at the balance sheets of the Brewing Companies it would be found that the profits made were not very large. He knew this was so in his own case, and believed that that state of things was general. There was not a large rate of interest made on the capital sunk. They were told in some quarters that the more water put into the beer the better; but the working men whom he knew — hardy agricultural labourers— liked to have as much malt as they could get in their beer for the money. The person who would suffer most by even the slight additional tax was, in his opinion, the farmer. At the present moment the tax of 6s. 3d. per barrel, or per two bushels of barley, was equal to the value of the barley growing in the field. It was a tax of 100 per cent. on the product, and, at any rate, so far as his constituents were concerned, barley was the only crop left out of which the farmers could make a decent profit. Hon. Members opposite did not profess to be great friends of the landowners or tenant-farmers, but they did profess to be the friends of the agricultural labourers, and he would therefore remind those hon. Members that the imposition of this extra taxation, however slight, tending as it would to injure the trade from which the labourers derived their wages, would tend to injure the labourers themselves.

Sir W. HARCOURT (whose observations were almost inaudible in the Reporters' Gallery) was understood to say that he was glad to hear a speech from the hon. Member who had just sat down, who was so well acquainted with the brewing trade. The hon. Member spoke not only as an agricultural Representative, but as having an interest in brewing. Ever since he (Sir W. Harcourt) entered Parliament the Malt Tax had been a grievance of the agricultural class, and when that was repealed the Beer Tax was objected to. He found that the profits on a glass of gin, rum, or brandy ranged from 100 to 260 per cent. The hon. Member repudiated the idea of the adulteration of beer, but he would suggest to him that instead of watering his beer he should follow the example of the gentleman on 'Change and "water his Stock." If the hon. Member and his friends would water the profit and keep the beer what it was, everybody, except, perhaps, the hon. Member, would be pleased. Of course, all taxes were more or less odious, but under the circumstances he did not see that any indirect tax that could be suggested was open to less objection than the one now proposed. In the time of Sir Robert Peel the amount of indirect taxation as compared with direct taxation shocked one's nerves to consider. At the present moment the indirect taxation of the country was greater than the direct taxation. He admitted that great progress had been made in improving the balance between the two—first, under the auspices of Sir Robert Peel, and then under the auspices of his right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and the tendency had been to bring direct taxation, through the Income Tax, the Death Duties, and other direct sources of taxation, more into play, and to throw less of the burdens upon the poor. That had been the policy during the last 50 years, during which there had been an enormous increase in the wealth and contentment of the people, and that was the path which he invited the House to continue to tread. The balance between direct and indirect taxation had not yet been equalised; but he had always thought it was not a fair thing to make a Budget deal exclusively either with direct or indirect taxation. He felt, however, that when financial proposals were made, the greater weight ought to fall upon direct taxation and not upon indirect taxation. As to methylated spirits, they were dealt with, like other spirits, according to a certain scale. He might mention that one of the things that had led to the enormous profits made on British spirits was that, whereas in old days foreign spirits, which were largely used as the basis of British manufactured spirits, cost a great deal, during the present year raw German spirit had been imported at 7s. 6d. a gallon. Hon. Members could conceive what profits were made by a manufacturer whose raw material could be obtained at that price.

Mr. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, he proposed to refer briefly to that portion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement which referred to agricultural land. It was, of course, impossible for him to appreciate at present the exact extent to which the right hon. Gentleman's proposals would operate. As far, however, as he was able to comprehend them, it seemed that the ultimate object of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to place land in an exactly similar position to that occupied by personal property. It was only last Friday that a discussion took place on the present deplorable position of the agricultural interest, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of it in the most sympathetic terms. Yet the declaration the right hon. Gentleman had made in his Budget speech seemed to imply that, so far from appreciating what the position of the landed interest really was, he had determined to place it in an infinitely worse position in the future than it occupied now. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had often in his great financial speeches referred to the fact that one of the difficulties under which the owners of land laboured at present, and one for which they were in no degree themselves responsible, was that in many instances their properties were charged with mortgages. Such mortgages had been incurred in bygone times, not necessarily to meet the extravagances of the tenants for life, but frequently for providing for younger children, and for other very proper objects. During the last 25 years a tendency had been shown by existing owners to endeavour to prevent the recurrence of this state of things in the future. He was bound to say that they had been assisted in this endeavour by the circumstances of the times, because many landed estates now had practically no value at all, and therefore could not be mortgaged. Happily, the development of the system of life insurance had enabled many existing tenants for life not merely to make provision for their young children, but also to relieve their successors of the obligations they would otherwise have to incur on succeeding to the estate. If he understood the Chancellor of the Exçhequer's proposals aright, one practical effect of them would be to force upon successors to landed estates in the future the obligation of mortgaging such estates, whether they liked it or not. He observed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shook his head, and he was very glad he did so, because he could not help hoping that he had misapprehended the full import of the proposals which had been made to the Committee. As far, however, as he was able to see, on the death of an existing owner, his own or other successor would be called upon to pay a lump sum based upon the capitalised value of the property, and spread, as Succession Duty now was, over a period of four years, the only difference being that, whereas at present the payments held over were not liable to interest, they would in future be charged with interest. How was the limited owner of property in agricultural land to get the money which the State would demand of him on succession to his property unless he raised it on mortgage? The man who succeeded to Consols, or Railway Stock, or other securities, could always obtain the sum demanded of him by the State, either by selling a part at once or by raising money on the securities until the market was favourable. The man who succeeded to agricultural land was, whether he was an owner in fee or a limited owner, in a totally different position, because in most cases he would be unable to sell, and in many cases would have the greatest possible difficulty in getting anyone to take his land for nothing. [*Ministerial laughter.*] Hon. Members might jeer at that remark, but he was confident that they would not be content in the cases he had in his mind to pay the rates and taxes, to provide money for keeping up the farmhouses and cottages, and to bear the other expenses, even if they got the land practically for nothing. There were thousands of acres of land which were at that moment out of cultivation, which nobody would buy, and which could be put to no purpose even if they were bought. It seemed to him that the only course that would be open to a man who succeeded to a landed estate and had to meet the demands of the Inland Revenue Department would be to raise a mortgage, or, in other words, to do the very thing which the present generation of landowners had been trying to make impossible in the future. He would not now attempt to discuss the ownership of land on its merits, although he thought that there was a very good case to be made out for the landowners. He was not ashamed to confess that he represented agricultural owners and farmers as well as agricultural labourers, and he thought that those who claimed to represent the labourers only would do well to remember that if they impoverished the owners they would injure the labourers as much as they would the owners. The burdens that fell on agricultural land at present were very heavy, notwithstanding the fact that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) did a good deal to help them by increasing the contributions that had been made to local taxation, and he only wished that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer had seen his way to further increase the sum from £7,000,000 to £10,000,000. It would then have been felt that the right hon. Gentleman had tried to help the agricultural interest with one hand, though he had felt compelled to punish it with the other. He did not think there would be any difficulty in showing that, whether it were regarded from the point of view of the taxes or from the point of view of the rates, agricultural land bore a very severely undue proportion of the burden it ought to bear. Although he fully understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made this proposal because he believed that land had hitherto enjoyed certain advantages with regard to the Death Duties, the result of the proposal would, he believed, be to place land in a still more advantageous position than it had hitherto occupied, and to place on the owners of the future burdens which they would have the greatest possible difficulty in meeting. If that were the result of the proposal made that evening, it would have been a bad day's work for the country, because it would make the position of the agricultural owners harder than it was now and would throw more difficulties in the way of the various classes who depended upon the land for a livelihood. He raised the question not from any desire to take a factious view of it, but simply because he thought it necessary to protest on behalf of those who were in a minority in the country, but who had hitherto done their best and, in his opinion, had nothing to be ashamed of, against a proposal which appeared likely to inflict a serious injury upon them.

Sir W. HARCOURT: We on this side of the House are always treated as if we were the natural enemies of the landed interest. I disclaim that position on my own behalf. I have lived in the country nearly all my life, and am quite as much interested in the welfare of the landed proprietors, and have quite as much knowledge of them, as any Member of the House. I should be extremely averse to doing consciously any injustice to a class for whom I have a great regard. Nothing I have proposed is, in my belief, unjustly adverse to their interests. The hon. Member said that land was now the last thing that anybody would buy. I will tell you what the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to do with land that nobody will buy. He is not going to tax it. Land is to be taxed upon its marketable value. Anybody who knows country life knows very well that it is the surveyor and the agent who tells everybody exactly what they are worth. I put a question the other day to a dealer as to the principle of valuing works of art, and the answer was that he valued them at what he knew he could sell them at, allowing a profit of 10 per cent. At all events, that is not an unfair way. It is not the practice of the Inland Revenue Department to take the extreme pound of flesh. If land has fallen in value and it is worth nothing, it will pay nothing. The question is as to the actual market value at the time the land is sold. It is the great ground rent property which will be touched by the Government proposal.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not answered the point raised by his hon. Friend. The real fact was that the duties were to be increased, and the right hon. Gentleman intended to get a certain number of additional millions from that increase; and those additional millions must be paid by the landowners, who said that they would have to raise the money either by mortgage or by insurance.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman uses the word "landowners." If he substitutes the words "real estate," I will agree with him.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, then the right hon. Gentleman did not expect to get more out of the landowners. But he could not escape from the proposition that if the rates were increased the landowner would have to make more provision by insurance than he made now. The right hon. Gentleman did not appreciate the very small margin that there was for this provision among landowners who were supposed to be wealthy because nominally their rent roll was high. On many estates the charges were large and the outgoings great, and the provision to be made for those large sums would be very much increased. It was because the right hon. Gentleman had not appreciated the point of his hon. Friend that he had intervened.

*Mr. A.P. ALLSOPP (Taunton) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis he estimated that the extra charge of 6d. a barrel on beer would produce £580,000?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, that in that matter he relied upon the authorities, who informed him that that was the sum which the duty would yield. It was taken upon an assumption of the diminished consumption, owing to the increase in the duty, which he was not at all sure would take place.

*Mr. A. P. ALLSOPP said that, as far as he could make out, 7½d. a barrel would produce £1,000,000, and that he could not see why, if it was only desired to raise an additional £580,000, it was necessary to impose an extra duty of 6d. per barrel.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he would make inquiry.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said, he regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have thought it necessary to increase the Death Duties on land, because he had always understood that it was difficult to find the money to pay them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that a man could insure his life to pay the Death Duty, but a great many would not do so, because their successors were just as well off as they were. He understood that the Death Duties on land were lower than the Death Duties on personal property because of the extra charges that had to be incurred by the owners of land in raising the money to pay the duties. He was very glad to hear that estates which returned very little would have to pay very little. As to estates valued by surveyors and others, who made it their business, he contended that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer valued land at the price put upon it by them it was a false value; and in order to raise the vast sums of money to pay the Death Duties, it would make it unequal with personal property. Hon. Members knew that the sale of personal property cost very little, but every £1,000 obtained by the sale of land cost a great deal. It had, therefore, always been considered up to this time a very fair thing that the Death Duties upon land should be lower than the Death Duties upon personal property. He would like to put this case to the right hon. Gentleman: For a large estate the sum of £750,000 had been offered. He did not say that the estate was worth it, but it was peculiarly situated, and a rich man was found to make the offer. The owner of the estate had lately died, and he wanted to know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant to say that his successor would have to pay Death Duties upon that valuation? Was he prepared to tax the land to such an enormous extent, simply because one man had offered this large sum of money for an estate which was not intrinsically worth it?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, the hon. Member could not expect him to say what he would get out of the Death Duties for an estate which had just fallen into Chancery. Several gentlemen had got up and made complaints of his conduct towards the agricultural interest, but he had arrived at an age when no man expected gratitude. Experience of life showed that it was a quality not to be found on the terrestrial globe. One country gentleman after another had got up in that House, and not one of them had made any acknowledgment of the abatement he had proposed under Schedule A of the £800,000 given to real estate out of Income Tax. The Government had been persecuted into getting rid of the Malt Duty, and now the repeal of the Malt Duty was a great crime against agriculture. He was going to make an allowance to-night under Schedule A, and to-morrow he would be told that it was a great evil to the landed interest. He had done what he had done not for the purpose of gaining support, but thinking that it was only a fair thing to do. These were not encouragements to a Chancellor of the Exchequer to operate in this direction.

***Mr. BYRNE** (Essex, Walthamstow) said, that as he understood the proposition of the Government, it was at the present moment to raise more revenue by the sale of beer and spirits. They did not propose to diminish the consumption of beer and spirits, and they were going to increase the taxation, and to allow the Revenue to rely more and more upon what was commonly known as the drink traffic. Was that action consistent with the action of the same Government in bringing in a measure of local option, which had for its object the diminution of the consumption of beer and spirits? It appeared to him that the Government were adopting two modes of legislation proceeding on entirely different principles. The more they sought to raise the Revenue by means of the drink traffic, without increasing the price to the consumer, the less title they had to claim to do that which so many hon. Members opposite desired—the getting rid, as far as possible, of the drink trade.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, he believed nothing was clearer than the fact that it was not the working classes of this country who were anxious to increase the Navy. That cry had come from the classes, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square (Mr. Goschen), was fairly entitled to the honour of being regarded as the King of the Jingoes, for it was he more than any other man in his position who had fostered the scare about the Navy. He listened to the right hon. Gentleman when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and raised the enormous sum necessary for the increase of our Navy, and the right hon. Gentleman then said that it would be necessary in the near future to contemplate a further increase. But the right hon. Gentleman was now obliged to admit that the charges imposed on that occasion were insufficient—[Mr. Goschen indicated dissent]—and to that extent, therefore, it was an unstatesmanlike proceeding, and it had left to the present Government the task of not only meeting the present severe demand, but of paying off the right hon. Gentleman's debt. They would hear a great deal more probably, both here and elsewhere, upon this question, for there was no possibility of our increasing our Navy without stimulating other nations to corresponding increase. He hoped the Government would soon make some effort, by way of appeal to the Governments of Europe, to check the stupendous folly which was hurrying the nations to a catastrophe which no human being could contemplate without horror and dismay. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was deserving of the highest praise on the part of the masses of the country for the courageous way in which he had dealt with the question of taxation. They were now engaged in the righteous crusade of undoing the wrongs of the past, and his right hon. Friend had not reached the limit of the change which he had introduced for properly adjusting the burdens of taxation. He would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite what sort of figures they presented to-day? They had urged on the Chancellor of the Exchequer an increase in the Navy, and directly it was sought to make provision for such increase they appealed to the right hon. Gentleman for exceptional treatment. He had been in the House for a quarter of a century, and whenever during that period an increase of taxation was made he had heard the same appeal from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite on behalf of the agricultural classes. The hon. Member for Liverpool asked for some abatement for the owners of large landed properties, because they would have a difficulty in raising taxation. But he (Mr. Illingworth) came from a part of the country where there were large properties which were not landed—large industrial undertakings, and many of these were heavily mortgaged. Well, the proprietors of these undertakings did not plead for exceptional treatment. The plea came from the idle class, and from those who had done nothing to earn their properties, but had had them left to them. They it was who asked to be relieved at the expense of the industrial classes. He ventured to think, however, that this onslaught on the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be entirely unsuccessful, and he wished to warn the Representatives of the landed classes that they were not going to strengthen their position in the country by putting forward such pleas as they had advanced to-night. He thought the task of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be easy in respect to increasing the Beer Duty. There was no class which had had such a return for the capital employed and, in the midst of the prevailing depression, had been accumulating so much money as the brewers, who had been employing a power for mischief in this country that ought to be checked.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I have listened with interest to the specimen of old Radicalism which we have just heard. The hon. Member with perfect consistency objects to the increase in the expenditure on the Navy proposed by Her Majesty's Government. Well, why did not he and others who agree with him express their sentiments the other night? He attributes to hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House the responsibility for the large increase of expenditure on the Navy. Sir, we accept that responsibility willingly, for we believe that the constituencies of the country, including that of the hon. Member himself, approve our action. But the Government have distinctly denied that we have any responsibility in the matter. They have taken the responsibility on their own shoulders of their own will, and without any pressure from us. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] That is what the Government themselves say, and do not hon. Members opposite believe their own Leaders? They insist that this increase of the Navy is made absolutely on their own motion, and that we have had absolutely nothing to do with it. But I do not care to question from which side of the House this proposal for an increase of expenditure comes; it is necessary, and the Opposition, whether they are responsible for it or not, are ready to support the Government in the course they have taken. While the hon. Member for Bradford goes on—as he has done for years in this House—comparing the burdens of the landlords with the burdens of other classes of the country, I confess I cannot help thinking that the hon. Gentleman is talking of a matter he does not quite understand. I could not wish anything worse for the hon. Member than that he should be a landlord with property in the South of England at the present moment. Sir, I should like to make a few observations to the Committee on that part of the Budget which the right hon. Gentleman has just proposed, which especially bears on this subject.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has found fault with the Opposition for not acknowledging the boon which he has conferred upon owners of land and real property by allowing deductions in calculating the Income Tax under Schedule A from the net instead of the gross value. I should be very sorry not to acknowledge that that is a boon, and I feel sure that hon. Members on this side of the House who represent agricultural constituencies will take the same view of it. But I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that in the deductions which he has proposed of 10 per cent. in the case of farms and 16 2-3 per cent. in that of houses he has not quite met the necessities of the case. Many years ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian stated that in his opinion a 7d. Income Tax upon Schedule A was practically equal to a 9d. Income Tax on account of the extra burdens. If the right hon. Gentleman had made deductions that would be equivalent to that amount, I think we might have felt obliged to him, but he has fallen much short of this.

SIR W. HARCOURT: We can withdraw the proposal.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I do not think he will withdraw it, because his Budget would be so unfair if he did not give this slight boon. I would ask him not merely to look at the authorities he quoted in his Budget, but also to have regard to the inquiry of the Select Committee—of which I was a Member—which was presided over by Mr. Ward Hunt, in 1867, on the Valuation Bill, which was proposed by the Government of that day. I think he will find that the Committee arrived at a practically unanimous conclusion as to the deductions that might be made throughout the country in calculating the net value of the rateable property from the gross value for purposes of rates, and if he would adopt the conclusion at which the Committee arrived I think it would be very much fairer to real property than what he has proposed. But, Sir, after all, what has the right hon. Gentleman proposed? It is not a boon to the landowner. It is a small matter so far as the landowners are concerned as compared with the owners of house property. I do not think that when the right hon. Gentleman suggested across the Table that he would possibly withdraw this, that he really had considered the full application of his proposal. I am sorry that in dealing with the Death Duties the right hon. Gentleman has not seen his way to make a clean sweep and to deal with the matter as a whole. I find there are five Death Duties—the Probate Duty, the Account Duty, the Legacy Duty, the Succession Duty, and the Estate Duty of my right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square. The right hon. Gentleman does practically nothing but fuse the Probate and Estate Duties. The Account Duty, after all, is merely a guard to the Probate Duty, as the right hon. Gentleman well knows. It is to prevent the evasion of it. It produces practically nothing to the Revenue of the country. In any way the right hon. Gentleman may propose to carry out that part of his Budget there must be some small guard to the new Estate Duty which he proposes to enact. Previous Chancellors of the Exchequer in dealing with this duty have invariably found that the produce of those duties has been less than their estimate. The right hon. Gentleman calculated that in the first year, assuming the Bill becomes law on June 1—which is very unlikely—the duty will produce £1,000,000. I myself do not believe anything of the sort, nor do I believe that in future years we shall get anything like £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 the right hon. Gentleman anticipates from the duty, because if the duties are increased and levied in the way he proposes they will be largely evaded. It is all very well to talk, as the hon. Member for Leicester talked, about the iniquity of anyone leaving property of a million in value. It may be right or wrong—I do not want to deal with that question. It is right from the point of view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I suspect that people who own millions will have the advice of skilled lawyers, who will take care that comparatively little of their wealth comes under the graduated scale of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That is a point that I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman has considered. But now I want to put to him one or two points with regard to the difference between real and personal property. The right hon. Gentleman proposes, in the first place, in return for the boon which he gives to real property, by calculating it under Schedule A, at its net rather than its gross value, to abolish the present system under which real property is calculated for Succession Duty at the life interest only, and not at the capital value. To that I have only to say that it is a very important change, the system of calculating life interest only being adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in 1853 on very sound and valid grounds, which the right hon. Gentleman may find out if he cares to refer to the remarkable speech that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian delivered in introducing his Budget in that year. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that it was a matter of simple fairness to real property that it should have this allowance as against personal property in calculating Succession Duty, and he proposed a Succession Duty on that basis on which it has remained. I do not now wish to argue the matter. I merely wish to assert that it is a very important change as against real property. Besides this great change, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes, with regard to Succession Duty, to maintain the existing system of payment by instalments which, for obvious reasons, is only fair. He proposes to insist upon a 3 per cent. interest being paid on these instalments, which has never hitherto been done. The right hon. Gentleman goes further, and adds the Probate Duty which real property has never hitherto paid. I will not go into the details or merits of these questions now. What I would say is: The right hon. Gentleman intends as he says—and I believe he intends it—to tax real and personal property equally to the Death Duties, and he proposes to tax them both to this new Estate Duty on their fair market value. Now, it is very easy, as a rule, to ascertain the fair market value of personal property, for the prices of railway shares, bank shares, brewery shares, and so on are quoted, but when we come to land it is a different matter. The right hon. Gentleman followed the common practice of the House when generalising with regard to land. He said that freehold property was constantly increasing in value, but whilst that may be the case in the towns and the neighbourhood of towns, in many parts of the rural districts the value of land has greatly depreciated. Now, what is the basis on which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to estimate this new Death Duty? He proposes to estimate it on the fair market value of the property. How are you to find out the fair market value of agricultural land? I know estate after estate in the South of England which have no present market value at all, and which are unsaleable.

SIR W. HARCOURT: They will pay nothing.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: Will the right hon. Gentleman put a clause into his Bill to provide that under such circumstances they shall pay nothing. I wish it had been possible for the right hon. Gentleman to put before the Committee the precise proposals he intends to make. I do not blame him for not doing it. He says the proposals will be embodied in the Bill, but we shall have to discuss these matters before we come to the Bill. We shall have to discuss them on the Resolution, and I would suggest to the Government that in common fairness to their proposals we ought to have placed before us in the shape of a Paper that could be laid on the Table of the House the precise proposals they intend to embody in the Bill, the effect of these proposals, and the way in which they will be interpreted by the officers of the Inland Revenue in calculating the fair market value. I would go further. Assuming that the market value in regard to estates such as I have suggested is calculated on a really fair basis, that basis will be that they are unsaleable, and that at the present moment the outgoings practically come up to the receipts from the properties. I am speaking of what I know, and many hon. Members on this side can confirm what I say. What is the value of the succession to such a property as that? Under the present law with regard to Succession Duty you have a system under which all the necessary outgoings are deducted before you arrive at the net annual rental, and then the net annual rental is capitalised in order to arrive at the capital value. Does the right hon. Gentleman propose any system of the kind in connection with the new Estate Duty, which will be of a very large amount in some cases? I do not think we have had any statement from him on that matter at the present moment. In calculating the value, is any allowance to be made for all these necessary outgoings? There is something more than this. I do not quite understand whether in calculating this new duty the real estate is to be subject to the Succession Duty as well as to the new Estate Duty. I gathered from the Solicitor General that in cases of lineal descent the new Estate Duty will cover the Succession Duty, but where estates do not descend lineally Succession Duty will be exacted plus the Estate Duty. That will impose an enormous additional burden upon estates of the kind I allude to. It is no sufficient answer to say that these estates will only be calculated on their fair marketable value. When you have property in the country reduced to such a point as I have described any additional burden is infinitely more killing than it is on property of larger value. It will simply ruin the holders of that property. Why has not the right hon. Gentleman attempted to deal with some of the grosser anomalies connected with the Death Duties? Legacy Duty, for example, is a matter of domicile; a person domiciled abroad does not pay Legacy Duty on personalty in England. A foreigner may be left Consols, railway shares, and other personal property in this country, and not one penny of Legacy Duty will he have to pay, but an Englishman domiciled here has to pay Legacy Duty on personal property not only in this country, but very often abroad as well. Not only has he to pay the duty here, but often he is also made to pay where the property is situated. If the right hon. Gentleman wants to deal with the Death Duties let him set that anomaly right, because I cannot conceive anything more grossly unfair to the Englishman as against the foreigner. Let me give another instance. There is what is called the cumulative Legacy Duty, when a property left for life to three persons in succession, and finally to a fourth, has to pay the duty four times, though it may pass direct from the first holder to the last, not coming into the hands of the second and third at all. Will the right hon. Gentleman remedy these injustices? I cannot suppose that he intends to continue such an unfair system in regard to his new Estate Duty. I regret to have detained the Committee so long, but I was anxious to say a few words on this important subject, and while I thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the boon he has conferred upon possessors of real property by the alteration under Schedule A of the Income Tax, I must say that the right hon. Gentleman has made too much of that boon if he puts against it the enormous increase with regard to the Death Duties. In my opinion, that increase of the Death Duties ought not to be made. In the circumstances of the moment it will be grossly unfair upon the owners of agricultural land. Let the right hon. Gentleman, if he thinks right, invent means of taxing the increased value of landed property in the neighbourhood of towns. In an endeavour of that kind I will support the right hon. Gentleman as readily as anyone, because I think it would be fair. I know there is a great deal of the value of land in towns which at present escapes taxation of every sort, and I think if it be possible—I know it would be administratively very difficult—it would be desirable to remedy that injustice. But I do protest strenuously against the imposition of fresh burdens upon the agricultural interest, burdens which will be felt not only by the landowner, but also by the farmer and the labourer. I say Her Majesty's Government have no right to impose it upon them.

Mr. E. B. HOARE (Hampstead) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had congratulated the Committee upon his having paid off £3,000,000 of Floating Debt. Well, no one was more opposed to a large Floating Debt than he (Mr. Hoare) was, but before they congratulated themselves upon having paid off £3,000,000 it would be advisable to inquire how he had done it.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I transferred it to the National Debt Commissioners.

Mr. BRODIE HOARE said, that was exactly his point. The right hon. Gentleman had transferred it to the National Debt Commissioners. He had paid off money borrowed for a year at $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and he had taken it from the Commissioners at three days' notice at $2\frac{1}{2}$. This was a proceeding which was neither lucrative nor safe. If the right hon. Gentleman had to borrow money above the market rate at three days' notice he ought to make some provision for paying it off.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have as little as possible to do with the Money Market. I know it has been a tradition that he ought to go there with a view of getting money a little cheaper than he can get it from the National Debt Commissioners. I constantly see articles saying that the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to support the Money Market, and that he ought or ought not to pay off Treasury bills. I hold that the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have nothing at all to do with the Money Market; it is not his business either to support or to depress the market; it is his business to look to the finances of the country. In my opinion, the existence of a large floating debt, in connection with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer goes into the market, is not a good system. I do not wish to abolish Treasury bills altogether; they may be useful, and I like to keep a small quantity of them; but as regards a Floating Debt generally, an Unfunded Debt, it is an evil which ought to be got rid of. Two years ago it was £36,000,000; to-day it is £11,000,000. I do not consider it the business of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to go into the market; he ought as far as possible to be independent of the market; and the market ought not to look to him for any action which should affect their proceedings. The Chancellor of the Exchequer holds a political and statesmanlike position, and ought not to be an agent or operator in the Money Market at all.

Sir M. STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he wished to emphasise the suggestion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should issue a Paper showing the intentions of the Government with regard to property valuation, and would further suggest that he should issue rules to guide valuators in ascertaining the true value of property. It was absolutely impossible at this time of day to say what property was really worth. He ventured to remind the right hon. Gentleman that a valuation roll or a rent roll was often no indication of value, as the expenses of keeping up an estate varied from 12 to 20 per cent. of the nominal income. He thought, therefore, that some guidance should be given to the valuer; otherwise the owners of some mortgaged estates would have absolutely to pay more in Death Duties than the property was actually worth.

Sir W. HARCOURT; I would appeal to the Committee to allow the Resolutions to be taken at once, in order that the rest of the evening may be devoted to the Mutiny Bill.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether he will circulate a statement explaining in detail his proposals affecting the Death Duties?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will consider the suggestion, and let the right hon. Gentleman know subsequently.

Mr. GOSCHEN: On what day will the discussion on the Resolutions be resumed?

Mr. BRODIE HOARE wished to say that he entirely agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he ought to be independent of the Money Market, but, being a creditor for £126,000,000 at three days' notice, the right hon. Gentleman could not be independent of the Money Market unless he made provision for paying it off.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I propose to take the discussion on the Resolutions one day next week; I cannot say which at present.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that when Mr. Childers proposed a much smaller alteration in the Death Duties in 1885 he circulated a statement on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman made this evening as full and complete a statement as could be made, but there are innumerable points which it was absolutely impossible to include, and therefore, before the present discussion is resumed, it is highly important that a similar statement to that issued in 1885 should be in the hands of Members.

Sir W. HARCOURT: All the proposals of the Government on the subject will be found in our Bill, and any statement short of the Bill will be incomplete. But so far as we can lay a statement on the Table we will do so.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman said that the discussion would be resumed some day next week. Surely the right hon. Gentleman will desire that there shall be adequate time given to adequately consider the enormous interests involved.

Question put, and agreed to.

Tea.

1. Resolved, That the Duties of Customs now chargeable upon tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say):

Tea . . the pound . Four Pence.—*(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

Customs Duty on Beer.

2. *Resolved*, That in lieu of the Duty of Customs now payable on Beer of the descriptions called or similar to Mum, Spruce, Black Beer, or Berlin White Beer, there shall be charged and paid the Duties following (that is to say) :—

	£	s.	d.
For every thirty-six gallons of Beer—			
Where the worts thereof are or were before fermentation of a specific gravity—			
Not exceeding one thousand two hundred and fifteen degrees	1	8	0
Exceeding one thousand two hundred and fifteen degrees	1	12	10
And, in addition to the Duty of Customs now payable on every other description of Beer there shall be charged and paid—			
For every thirty-six gallons where the worts thereof were before fermentation of a specific gravity of one thousand and fifty-five degrees	0	0	6

And so in proportion for any difference in gravity. — *(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

Excise Duty on Beer.

3. *Resolved*, That in addition to the Duty of Excise now payable in respect of Beer brewed in the United Kingdom there shall be charged and paid—

For every thirty-six gallons of worts of a specific gravity of one thousand and fifty-five degrees the Duty of Six Pence,

And so in proportion for any difference in quantity or gravity.—*(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

Customs Duty on Spirits.

4. *Resolved*, That, in addition to the Duties of Customs now payable on Spirits, there shall be charged and paid the Duties following (that is to say) :—

	£	s.	d.
For every gallon computed at proof of Spirits of any description except Perfumed Spirits . . .	0	0	6
For every gallon of Perfumed Spirits	0	0	10
For every gallon of Liqueurs, Cordials, mixtures, and other preparations entered in such a manner as to indicate that the strength is not to be tested	0	0	8

And the Duties of Customs on the articles hereinafter mentioned, being articles of which Spirits are a part or ingredient, shall be proportionately increased, and shall be as follows :—

		£	s.	d.
Chloral Hydrate .	the pound	0	1	4
Chloroform .	the pound	0	3	3
Collodion . .	the gallon	1	6	3
Ether Acetic .	the pound	0	1	11
Ether Butyric .	the gallon	0	16	5
Ether Sulphuric .	the gallon	1	7	5
Ethyl, Iodide of .	the gallon	0	14	3

—*(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

Excise Duty on Spirits.

5. Resolved, That in addition to the Duty of Excise now payable for every gallon computed at proof of Spirits distilled in the United Kingdom there shall be charged and paid the Duty of Six Pence, and so in proportion for any less quantity.—*(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow ; Committee to sit again upon Wednesday.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 16.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) moved, after the word "shall," in line 23, to insert—

"Subject to the appointment of a Judge Advocate General responsible to Parliament."

The object of the Amendment was to secure the appointment of a Judge Advocate General, who should be responsible to Parliament, and whose duty it should be to go carefully through all the proceedings of Courts Martial held under the Bill. The powers over soldiers given by the Bill were very extensive ; and it was most necessary that there should be a Judge Advocate General, sitting in Parliament, to see that these powers were not abused. Hitherto the Government of the day had appointed as Judge Advocate General one of their own Ministers, who sat in the House, who was responsible to Parliament, and in whose responsibility all the Members of the Government had shared. But they had entirely changed that system. They had no longer got a Judge Advocate General who sat in Parliament and was responsible to Parliament. At present the office was held by Sir F. Jeune, one of the Judges of the Court of Probate, who was appointed by the Crown, whose salary was paid out of the Consolidated

Fund, and who, therefore, was not responsible to that House. The duties of the post if properly performed were of a very onerous character. There were some 1,500 Courts Martial held in the course of the year; and the Judge Advocate General ought to look into every one of those Courts Martial if he performed his duty properly. They might be told that Sir Francis Jeune had got a Deputy Judge Advocate General; but this matter was too important to entrust to a deputy, and the Judge Advocate General should have a seat in Parliament and be responsible to Parliament.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 23, after the word "shall" to insert the words "subject to the appointment of a Judge Advocate General."—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): I must complain that this Amendment has been sprung without notice upon the Committee, and that, though opportunity has been afforded by frequent adjournments of the Bill, it has not been placed by the hon. Member on the Paper. But I am perfectly prepared to give the hon. Gentleman an answer. The hon. Gentleman desires that there should be a Judge Advocate General present in this House and responsible to this House. The first condition attaching to the presence of a Judge Advocate General in the House of Commons, and responsible to it, is that he should be a paid officer. I am no believer in the responsibility of an officer to Parliament who is not paid for the duties he has to discharge, and I should have no great confidence in the ability of the kind of Judge Advocate General who would be likely to take the office in the circumstances of receiving no pay. If, however, my memory does not deceive me, the hon. Member was, if not the head of the pack, at all events a somewhat noisy member of the pack, who ran down the unfortunate Judge Advocate General as an appointment. [Mr. HANBURY dissented.] I may be mistaken as to the hon. Member, but certainly year after year the House was told by certain active Members that the office of Judge Advocate General was a sinecure. The appointment was examined into by the Army Estimates Committee, and the conclusion which was come to, and which I think was pressed on the Treasury by that Committee, was that there should be no payment of the £1,000 a year which was then given to the Judge Advocate General. Speaking candidly, for myself, I have never taken that view personally. I have always maintained that there ought to be a Judge Advocate General, who ought to be adequately paid, not on account of the actual amount of work performed in the course of a week or a year, but because it is desirable to secure for the office a competent person and a lawyer of authority. I would remind the Committee that Sir William Marriott undertook the duties of the office for nothing, and so great had been the zeal of that gentleman that the whole of the allowances available for fees had been absorbed within the first two or three months of the year, leaving nothing for his successors. Taking into account, therefore, the fact that the Committee have adopted a view against the Office, and that the Treasury are unwilling to sanction a sufficient salary for the post, I did the best I could by asking Sir Francis Jeune to undertake the duties connected with the Office, while at present there is in the Office of the Deputy Judge Advocate General Mr. O'Dowd, who is acquainted with all the duties. I cannot imagine that, short of having a paid official of high standing and authority in the House, the position would be bettered. As I said, I have always expressed my personal opinion in favour of such an official, but I do not think it would be easy to induce the House of Commons to reverse the decision which was given formerly, and therefore I am disposed at present to leave the matter as it now stands.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, the right hon. Gentleman had conclusively proved that there ought to be a Judge Advocate General, and yet he was going to oppose the appointment. What were the reasons which the right hon. Gentleman gave against the appointment? First of all, there was a difficulty about the salary. The Army Estimates Committee had recommended that there should be a Judge Advocate General, but that instead of being paid by salary he should be paid by fees, and the right hon. Gentleman sheltered himself behind that decision. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that there was an able Assistant Judge Advocate General in the person of Mr. O'Dowd. If that were so—and he fully agreed with the right hon. Gentleman—Mr. O'Dowd ought to be made Judge Advocate General, in order that he might have a proper standing to enable him to deal with the Courts Martial. This was a most important matter, which affected 250,000 of Her Majesty's subjects, who were necessarily deprived of their civil rights, who had no recourse to the Courts and no protector except a Judge Advocate General, whom the Government would not appoint in such a way as that he would be responsible to the House. His belief was that everybody who had any knowledge of this office was fully alive to the necessity of it, and there was no one more so than the Secretary of State for War, though the right hon. Gentleman asked the House not to agree to the appointment.

Question put, and negatived.

Mr. HANBURY moved, in line 28, to leave out "April" and insert "May." He could not see why the Act should not come into force in all portions of Her Majesty's dominions on the same date. It came into force in the United Kingdom on the 30th of April; elsewhere in Europe on the 31st of July, and elsewhere on the 31st of December. Perhaps these three different dates were relics of the old time when communication was not so good as at present; but now there was no reason whatever for drawing such a distinction. If the Act came into operation on the same day it would avoid a great deal of confusion. The principal object of the Amendment was to get more time for the discussion of the Bill. When Parliament year after year had to do what was constitutionally against the law, there ought to be very ample time for consideration. His chief reason for moving this Amendment was in order to get more time and to avoid the answer constantly given them, that the Bill was not controversial, or that there was not proper time to discuss it. He maintained that a Bill like this, which was re-enacted every year, and which affected the liberties of so many of Her Majesty's subjects, was a controversial measure, and it became especially so when the Government introduced into it important Amendments affecting the question of the punishment of soldiers. If the commencement of the operation of the measure were postponed for a month or so then Ministers would not be driven to rush it through at these unusual hours, when it was impossible that the interests of the soldiers, which were so vitally affected by this Bill, could be properly considered. They had no right to assume it was a Bill to be hurried through in this way. The questions of the flogging of native troops in India, the imprisonment of soldiers for military offences in civil prisons, and the right of soldiers to have the evidence against them taken on oath, were all matters which ought to be fully discussed, but which, owing to the early date at which the Bill had to pass into law, it was impossible for them adequately to discuss. These were the main reasons for his proposing the present Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 28, to leave out the word "April," and insert the word "May."—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'April' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, in opposing the Amendment, asked why was it that this Bill was annually submitted to Parliament? It was that Parliament might have control over the maintenance of the Standing Army. The Standing Army could only be maintained under discipline if this Bill were passed. He well remembered the discussions that took place when the old Mutiny Bill was superseded by the Army (Annual) Bill, and he could say with confidence it was never contemplated that every time the Army (Annual) Act was introduced there should be a general review of the whole of the provisions of the Military Law. Those provisions were settled once and for all. Of course they could be altered by special legislation at any time, but the Army (Annual) Bill was intended merely, as he said, for two purposes. In the first place, to provide for a disciplinary power over the Army; and, in the second place, to afford the Executive Government an opportunity of making any comparatively small amendments as to their experience proved to be necessary in the administration of the law. The hon. Member said that this was a controversial measure, and that a good deal of time was required to discuss it. Would the Committee believe that although the hon. Member was a Member of this House through the whole of the last Parliament, this Bill never occupied any time in the discussions, year after year, during the whole of that time? He would not say absolutely that there never was a single word uttered about it, because on one occasion the late Sir John Pope Hennessey did raise some question connected with the Marines; but if he said that in the course of the last Parliament there were only from 10 to 20 sentences uttered in the House on the subject of military discipline and law he should be well within the mark. But during this Parliament things had changed, and this being a Bill which it was necessary the Government should get through in order to maintain discipline in the Army, the hon. Member and his hon. Friend near him (Mr. Gibson Bowles) seized this as a glorious opportunity for occupying a little of the time of the Government. The hon. Member had protested against any sudden action in the matter, in order that opportunity should be afforded for Amendments to be put down. What was the result? Half-a-dozen Amendments coming from the hon. Member and his hon. Friend.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, there was an Amendment down from the right hon. Gentleman's side of the House.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, yes, it was a fortunate circumstance, and just sufficient to break the monotony that a single Amendment had been put down from the Ministerial side, bearing upon a matter not concerned at all with the discipline of the Army. The point the hon. Member now raised was that, in order to give opportunity for the fullest discussion of the whole system of military discipline and law every year—a thing certainly not conducive to the best interests of the Army—that the Bill should be postponed coming into operation till the end of May. Up to 1879 there were a good many dates in the different countries over which the British Army was scattered, but these different dates were ultimately simplified, and those now in the Bill were adopted. For his part, he failed to see any reason why they should be changed. If the date for bringing the measure into operation were postponed, as the hon. Member desired, it was likely that in some distant parts of the Empire there would be a danger of a period interposing itself when it would be doubtful whether the last or the new Act prevailed. It should be borne in mind that some little time must elapse before the Bill could arrive in India and other possessions far away. In his opinion, there was no reason why more time should be afforded for the discussion of the measure.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) desired to say a word in reference to what had fallen from the Secretary for War as regarded the proceedings on the Army (Annual) Act in this and the last as compared with previous Sessions. The secret of the Bill having been so little discussed during the last Parliament was that no changes of any importance were introduced into it by the Executive. Last year, not only were several important changes introduced, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman himself could hardly have appreciated their importance before he came down to defend them in Committee. The result was that they were kept up all night and many points still remained unexplained, whilst, if he recollected aright, the House of Lords put in one important Amendment which was accepted by the Government. It could not, therefore, be said that the efforts of his hon. Friends behind him on that occasion were futile. In consequence of the discussions the Army Act had been reprinted, and at the time to which he referred it was such a mass of Amendments that neither the Secretary for War nor his legal advisers were able to find the points on which they based their defence.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said, the right hon. Gentleman had alluded to the fact that Sir John Pope Hennessey had raised a matter under the Army (Annual) Act. He remembered the instance to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded, and a very important question was raised then, and a pledge was given to comply with the point raised. That pledge the Government had not yet carried out. These same pledges had been repeated to him within the present Parliament——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not speaking to the Amendment.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER said, he was merely referring to the example quoted by the Secretary for War, because he wished to have some explanation on the point. What he wished to know was, whether hon. Members had a right to discuss important points on this Bill, or whether it was out of Order to do so?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not speaking to the Amendment, which is to leave out "April" and insert "May."

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER did not desire to support the Amendment, but he should like to know whether the remarks made by the Secretary for War were to be a guide to him in this matter or not? He did not desire to prolong the Debate, but he should be glad to know if he should be going outside the limits of the Debate if he were to dwell upon an important point raised by the reference of the right hon. Gentleman, because unless they discussed it now no opportunity would arise hereafter. If he was out of Order in discussing what had been said he would wait until some other Amendment came on upon which it would be in Order to make the observations he intended to make.

Mr. HANBURY, referring to the observations of the Secretary for War, said the right hon. Gentleman had already been told by the Member for Guildford that the reason why these matters were discussed in the last Session was because important Amendments were introduced which they were entitled to discuss. But whether important Amendments were introduced or not, a Bill of this character ought not to be brought on for discussion after 12 o'clock at night.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) observed that, in his opinion, it was not very important whether the date was fixed for the 30th April or 30th of May. He did not altogether follow the strictures passed on hon. Members that evening by the Secretary of State for War, and for his part he reserved his right to ask a few questions when this Amendment was got rid of.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. HANBURY said, he desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question arising on Sub-section *(c)* of this same clause. The point was one that had often been brought to his notice by many officers who had had long service in India, and referred to the length of the sentences that were passed on the troops serving in India. These were generally similar in length to those passed on the troops in England, which was unjust, because he was told that one month's imprisonment in India was practically an equivalent punishment to a sentence of six months in this country on account of the different character of the prisons, the heat and climate, and considerations of that kind. He was informed that the condition of some of the Indian prisons was such that British troops ought not to be imprisoned in them under any circumstances. Imprisonment in Indian gaols was a very serious matter, and twice or three times as severe as the punishment of imprisonment in English gaols. He had evidence before him that the rate of mortality in Indian prisons ranged from 75 to 150 per 1,000, and he certainly did not think that English soldiers should be subject to imprisonment in gaols in which so high a death-rate prevailed—a death-rate unheard of in English prisons. He believed that Indian prisons were not fit to be occupied by Europeans; the water and the sanitary arrangements were both bad, and the warders were too often criminals themselves. He did not want to press his Amendment unnecessarily, but he thought his argument was sufficient to convince the Committee that sentences of imprisonment in Indian gaols should not be on the same scale as the sentences to English prisons, and he hoped the Secretary for War would undertake to look into the matter.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The Amendment is not strictly regular, because it would have the effect, if passed, of removing the Indian Army from the operation of the Army (Annual) Act, and leaving it outside the Discipline Act—a very undesirable result. But he would undertake to make inquiry into the points raised by the hon. Member. He was surrounded by officers who had a most thorough knowledge of India, and he had no doubt that they were as well informed on the subject as the correspondent of the hon. Gentleman. He would make a point of asking them whether anything could be done in this matter.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, he agreed that it did not matter whether the main Act was passed in 1881 or at any other date, because he held that whenever passed it was open to reform if opportunity should offer. Years ago private soldiers were treated worse than horses, but now things were different. Last year undoubtedly the consideration of this Army (Annual) Bill was hurried, because it was thought desirable to get through the business before Good Friday. He had one question to put to the Secretary of State for War, and that was how it was that hon. Members were unable to see a copy of this Act of Parliament. He had applied in the Library and had been unable to get a copy. All he had been shown was the Bill passed in 1881, and it certainly was unreasonable for any hon. Member to be expected to find out for himself all the amendments which had been made to the Bill since 1881. This further he wanted to know, whether soldiers received a copy of the Army Act. [*A laugh.*] It was all very well for hon. Members to laugh when he suggested that soldiers should have a copy; but they ought to remember that by this Act they were taking away the civil liberties, and in many cases the lives, of 250,000 of our fellow-citizens, and it was the duty of hon. Members to protect the interests of those citizens, and to see that they were treated in as decent and respectable a manner as a human being ought to be. The Secretary for War had complained that only two or three hon. Members had put down Amendments to this Bill, but the explanation of that fact was to be found in the difficulty of getting copies of the measure. He hoped the right hon. Member would vouchsafe him an answer to these questions, because not only himself but many other hon. Members desired to study these matters in order to do justice to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects.

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somerset, Wellington) said, when he was in the Army the practice was for the officer commanding a company to read out sections of the Act every Saturday afternoon, thus enabling the men to understand its provisions. He thought this was a most excellent practice, and he would like to ask if copies were still sent to regiments to enable the officers to do this?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, that considerable amendment was made in the Act last year, and in consequence of that he gave orders that it should be reprinted at once. But the Statute Law Revision Committee and the Stationery Office both declined to consent to put their *imprimatur* on the Act, if then printed, because it might be further amended that year. As a matter of fact, it was further amended later in the Session. There was consequently considerable delay in bringing out the Act, but he gave directions immediately it was printed that a number of copies should be sent to the Library of the House of Commons, and the Act was also circulated to every regiment in the Service, so that there was no difficulty in the way of commanding officers making the men acquainted with its provisions.

Sir F. FITZWYGRAM (South Hants, Fareham) said, he could not concur with the hon. Member for Preston in his complaint as to the condition of the Indian prisons. He served several years in India, both in the Bombay and Bengal Presidencies, and he could only say that the cells in which the soldiers were confined were large, roomy and airy. He thought that the Indian Government were most careful of the healths of the prisoners, at any rate during the period of his service in India, and he never heard a soldier make a single complaint either as to the cell in which he was confined or as to his treatment. The warders in most cases were garrison-warders.

Mr. HANBURY said, no doubt the hon. and gallant Gentleman was speaking from his own experience, but he did not think that that experience was very recent. He must be aware, if he had studied the Army Act with regard to the committal of prisoners, that it was possible to commit military prisoners to civil prisons. He was not complaining of the military prisons in any way, for both in India and in England they were very conveniently arranged, but he was complaining of the committal to civil prisons in India of prisoners for military offences, because these Indian civil prisons were exactly of the description he had given.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said that, in regard to the prisons in which soldiers were confined, they were of two kinds. First, there were the cells to which his hon. and gallant Friend had alluded, and which were attached to most barracks. They, of course, were everything that was desirable. His hon. Friend the Member for Preston had, however, alluded to the civil prisons, which were certainly not suited for the incarceration of Europeans. They were all very well for the natives, but they certainly could not be considered to be desirable places for Europeans. He would suggest that, if it were necessary to commit military prisoners to these Indian civil prisons, special rooms should be set apart for them. It was not so much a matter of insanitation as it was the disadvantageous and depressing influence of the Indian climate on Europeans that had to be considered.

Mr. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, that he had had some experience of Indian gaols, and he had frequently asked European prisoners incarcerated in them if they had any complaint. The chief complaint he had received was that of the sameness of the food, and that was a very trifling matter. He did not think there was any ground of complaint on the score of work. Europeans were only put to tasks which the weakest natives could undertake, and it was a perfect farce to call it hard labour.

Mr. A. C. MORTON complained that the Secretary for War had given no reply to his questions as to whether the private soldiers were allowed to have a copy.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he thought he had answered that question when he stated that he directed a copy to be sent to every regiment. He understood that when the Act reached the commanding officers there were ample means in the power of every private to see it.

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES asked if it was not the fact that the last copy which was printed only came into the possession of the regiments just at the time it was about to expire. Was that an exceptional circumstance?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, it was an exceptional circumstance, as the Session lasted the whole year through, and he had already explained that it was impossible to get it printed until the close of the Session.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, the right hon. Gentleman had told them he directed copies of the Act to be sent to the Library, but would he direct that every Member of the House should receive a copy?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he had no power to interfere with the Government arrangements for the distribution of Parliamentary Papers.

Mr. A. C. MORTON said, he thought his demand that every Member of the House should have a copy was only a fair one.

Mr. HANBURY thought it was more important to secure that soldiers were made acquainted with the provisions of the Act, which contained something like 190 clauses. The point was whether the mere reading out on parade was sufficient. It was too much to call on a private soldier to pay 1s. 6d. for a copy of the Act, and therefore steps should be taken to see that every soldier had a right of access to it, either in the Regimental Library or in the canteens. Every soldier ought to know under what law he served.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he had had reprinted the Act as amended down to the end of last Session, and had had it circulated throughout the Service. He did not think it was at all necessary to send a copy to every Member of the House, but he would see that the hon. Member had one.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: That is not quite good enough for me ——

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! A certain amount of latitude has been necessarily allowed to the hon. Member because this clause applies the Army Act, but he is not entitled to pursue the subject any further.

MR. HANBURY said, he noticed that Sub-section 3 fixed the number of the regular forces "exclusive of the Marine force." Why were the figures set out in one case and not in the other? Was there no limit to the Marine force that might be employed in the United Kingdom? Practically that constituted part of the Standing Army; the men served on land and came under the Army Discipline Act, and he would like to know the reason for the distinction thus made?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Apparently the number is not stated in the Act, but, of course, the Vote of Parliament controls it.

MR. HANBURY: Why is it not stated?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I cannot tell.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 3.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

*MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, this clause provided that certain prices for billeting mentioned in the Schedule of the Army Act, 1881, should be paid to licensed victuallers. These prices referred to the allowances for both horses and men, and were fixed from time to time by Parliament, while with regard to horses and vehicles impressed for military service, power was given to the Justices of the Peace to increase the amount fixed in the Schedule by not more than one-third, should that be deemed to be just. Now in places near to military centres, from and towards which the troops were constantly moving, the publicans were in these days, when the prices of forage were high, put to considerable expense, and the tax placed upon them was heavier than Parliament ever intended. He happened to be a member of a deputation from various parts of England, which waited on the Secretary for War to point out the hardship thus inflicted, and he now ventured to move the omission of the clause, in order to give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of saying what he was prepared to do in this matter. It could not be suggested that 1½d. left much of a margin of profit on a breakfast for a healthy soldier; while as to the horses, it often occurred that an innkeeper who had no stables of his own lost from 10d. to 1s. a night each horse by having to put it out at livery. Could not something be done to increase the Schedule prices in these cases?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I think I satisfied, or at least endeavoured to satisfy, the deputation, when they came to see me at the War Office, that there was no such injustice in these prices as they seemed to think. I have looked carefully into the matter, and having gone over a large number of years I find that, taking the variations which there have been in the prices within these years, the charges allowed for billets have been fairly justified. It must be remembered, with regard to the charge of 1½d. for breakfast, that that is an allowance for breakfast which took the place of an allowance of nothing at all for breakfast. It should also be remembered by the Committee that we do not pretend to give the soldier a breakfast. This sum of 1½d. furnishes him merely with the basis or rudiments of a breakfast, say a piece of bread and a cup of tea, upon which he may build up a breakfast out of his own resources. It was almost a work of supererogation to have granted it at all, and in any case it must not be taken as meaning the full value of the full breakfast of a healthy, hungry soldier. There is, no doubt, a considerable amount of hardship inflicted because of the unequal distribution of billets. In the districts where there are frequent movements of great bodies of troops there is an unusual amount of billeting imposed upon the publicans. I am not sure that that is very much to complain of. I remember my predecessor, speaking in the House upon this matter, said the only complaint he had received was from a man whose grievance it was that troops were not billeted upon him oftener. I am endeavouring, however, with the help of military advice, to find some plan by which extreme cases can be modified—whether we can in some places in the districts where the movements of troops are frequent acquire ground in the immediate neighbourhood where the marches take place in the summer for camps of rest. I hope we shall be able to do that. No one can be more interested in the matter or be more capable of bringing it to a reasonable and successful conclusion than my gallant Friend Sir Evelyn Wood, in whose province, as Quartermaster General, this matter lies. There is one point to which my hon. Friend alluded—namely, the price of forage. Undoubtedly this last year the prices of forage ran very high, but looking back over several years and taking the average for 10 years I find that the average price per ration of forage is 1s. 9d. The average at which we have been able to provide that same ration of forage during the last 10 years is 1s. 2½d. I think the Committee must see that there is a margin here which would, at all events, protect the publican's pocket from loss. It must always be remembered—and I want to lay this down very positively—that this duty of billeting is laid upon those who bear the burden by the conditions of their licence. And let me say also that it is nothing like the burden it was 20 or 30 years ago, when movements of troops by road were very much more general than they are now.

MR. BRODRICK said, he was very glad the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take some steps for the assistance of those places wherein troops were being constantly billeted. With regard to the forage question, the right hon. Gentleman had pointed out the distinction in the price of forage as paid to publicans and as bought for the Army, but he did not mention that the publican had often to pay for the hire of stables out of his allowance for forage. They had often to pay 6d. or 9d. out of the money allowed for stabling accommodation. If the right hon. Gentleman would carry out these proposals, great satisfaction would be given to the locality he (Mr. Brodrick) represented. He must remind the right hon. Gentleman that he was hardly correct in saying that taking a period of years the amount allowed for soldiers' food was sufficient, because a few years ago it was found necessary, not only to add 1½d. for breakfast, but the whole amount was raised from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 9d. The soldier could not obtain things at a public-house at the same price as he could at his own canteen.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, he had felt very strongly upon this matter for a long time, and a number of licensed victuallers felt strongly upon it also. Because it was an ancient injustice it did not become more tolerable because of its antiquity. He said it was the duty of the War Office to look into this matter fairly. To his mind, it was a monstrous injustice to ask a licensed victualler to put up a man and to lose money upon it. A soldier was allowed 4d. for his bed, which was the price that a tramp paid at a common lodging-house. As to the sum allowed for a soldier's food, it was nothing more or less than confiscation of the licensed victualler's property. It seemed to him that the authorities in fixing this unjust responsibility on licensed victuallers knew that they could not pay themselves, and that they had to look to be recouped out of the amount that the men spent in drink. This proceeding on the part of a party of temperance was a monstrous contradiction of the principles they professed. The whole matter wanted looking into in a business-like manner. He could never see any reason why soldiers should be billeted on licensed victuallers. The practice fell unjustly and inequitably upon places mostly in the South of England. He held very strongly that the licensed victuallers ought not be called upon to pay money out of pocket to accommodate the defenders of the country. If any men engaged in the Public Service had to be moved from one part of the country to another the State ought to pay the cost. He was at a loss to understand why ancient authorities put this burden on the licensed victuallers. He could never see any connection between beds and beer, unless it was supposed that the men must first get drunk in the public-houses and then go to bed. It would be better for the *morale* of the soldier, and of the publican, too, if the practice were abolished. He was radical enough to wish for reform, but the proceeding of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War was conservative in maintaining this monstrous anomaly because it was ancient.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, he could not help thinking that the explanation which had been given of the charge for breakfast accentuated the injustice of the thing. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War said that 1½d. was the price of the rudiments of a breakfast. They placed the innkeeper under a statutory obligation to provide a breakfast.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No—to provide so much breakfast as that will pay for.

SIR A. ROLLIT said, it was admitted that that was not the price of a breakfast, but a mere gratuity. It was grossly unjust, and he ventured to say that thing would be easily remedied by letting the soldier have his allowance as in barracks.

MR. CORNWALLIS (Maidstone) said, it was no satisfaction to the publicans to be told by the Secretary for War that the price paid for fodder averaged well. He should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman expected the publicans to provide for officers at 1s. 9d.? He himself (the Secretary for War) allowed officers 2s. 1d. for the same amount of fodder on account of the increased cost.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract) said, the price allowed for fodder had been a great grievance in the past year. He thought the publicans had a right to expect a fair price for fodder, and not to have to undergo an excessive amount of billetting. The publican did not expect to get any money out of it, but he certainly was entitled to be compensated for the actual expense to which he was put. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would find some way of meeting these exceptional hardships. Troops had been billeted day after day in the North Country during the coal dispute, and the publicans there had been seriously out of pocket on account of the nominal prices paid.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, he wished to support the contention that much hardship had been inflicted upon publicans because of the high price of forage. He had had some experience of this matter, because all the work of the cavalry regiment to which he formerly belonged was done by march route. With regard to the men's breakfasts, all he could say was that in his time they were satisfied with a pipe of tobacco. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would allay much dissatisfaction if he could devise some scheme for alleviating the hardships which were now done to publicans through the billetting regulations.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said, their complaint was that the schedule of prices was sometimes fair and sometimes unfair. If the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War would inspire himself with the spirit of the ordinary Army Act, which provided that in case of impressment of carriages and horses the Justices should have power to vary the Schedule, having regard to the current prices in the nearest market town, he could find a way out of the difficulty. He suggested that it would be within the right hon. Gentleman's power to fix a sliding scale for billetting in the same way as was done by the Army Act for impressed carriages.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he did not think a sliding scale would meet the difficulty. This matter had been investigated by a Committee when there was more billetting than now, and they came to the conclusion that the prices were fair. The actual value of the soldier's ration was now 8 per cent. higher than it used to be, and so he really did not see that any case could be made out upon its merits that the publican would benefit by a sliding scale. Having looked carefully into the matter, he must say that he honestly believed the amounts paid were sufficient. There was certainly something in the grievance brought forward by the hon. Member for Maidstone. That was the particular grievance for which he was now trying to find a remedy.

MR. DODD: May I be allowed to withdraw my Amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no Amendment before the Committee. The Question is "That this clause stand part of the Bill."

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 151; Noes 20.—(Division List, No. 25.)

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

Clause 6.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said, he had several times attempted to say a few words with regard to the alterations made by this Bill in the law relating to District Courts Martial. He had no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's) idea in proposing those alterations was to give the greatest amount of justice to the soldier. Hon. Members had always found in their dealings with the right hon. Gentleman that he was animated by feelings of that character, and they had always been treated by him with courtesy. As to the subject of counsel appearing directly for a prisoner at a District Court Martial, the first question he would put to the right hon. Gentleman was whether such a change in the law was needed? During the 18 years in which he served in the Army he could not recollect a single instance of counsel appearing for a prisoner, and of the many officers he had consulted, some of them of longer service than himself, none could remember more than two instances. The soldier's idea of justice was the maximum of justice and the minimum of law, and that up to the present time he had enjoyed with satisfaction to himself. Though he (Colonel Lockwood) could remember many lenient sentences which had been inflicted by Courts Martial, he could not recollect one vindictive sentence. He believed that if counsel were allowed to appear in future as proposed by the Bill the number of Courts Martial in which they would appear would be greatly augmented, especially if it became known that a soldier had in any case been acquitted on some technical point of law. It would be rather hard upon the man who could not afford to pay counsel that he should be debarred from employing a skilled adviser, when his comrade who had more money could do so. In a Civil Court the Judge or Magistrate could appoint a counsel to plead for a prisoner. He should not like the right hon. Gentleman to take it that he was violently opposed to the proposed new arrangement, but he did see objections to it. Neither the President nor the officers of a District Court Martial were officers of very great experience. He believed the knowledge of the law such officers possessed was greater now than it was when he was in the Service 12 years ago. Still, they were not, as a rule, men capable of arguing a point of law. Their knowledge of the law was principally knowledge of the Law of Evidence, and he could not believe that they were capable of understanding the subtleties and niceties of legal questions. It must be borne in mind that if counsel were allowed to appear for a prisoner, as in a Civil Court, it would be necessary to have a skilled prosecutor. He very much doubted whether the ordinary Judge Advocate General would be capable of arguing with his hon. and learned Relative the Member for York (Mr. Lockwood) or other distinguished gentlemen who might practise before Courts Martial. He hoped that the proposal now made would not be a step towards allowing solicitors to practise before District Courts Martial. To be logical, the right hon. Gentleman should carry his proposal still further, and allow counsel to appear not only before Regimental Courts Martial, but before the Commanding Officer, when the first examination took place.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My hon. and gallant Friend has at last found an opportunity of giving his opinion on this subject, and it is a very clear and intelligible opinion. At the same time, I must say that I, with much less personal acquaintance with the course of proceedings in Courts Martial than he has, have come to the other conclusion. I do think that even before a District Court Martial a prisoner may sometimes be placed at a disadvantage when he has to defend himself in a somewhat complicated case, and when his advisers can only put questions to him indirectly, and cannot address the Court. I believe that in cases dealing with money, for instance, which often come before Courts Martial, there is a possibility, I will not say of any great injustice being done, but of a sense of injustice being aroused, and that is almost as bad. This is the reason why I agreed to the effect of the Motion which was proposed last summer by the hon. Member for Roxburghshire (Mr. Napier). Of course, if a prisoner is defended by counsel, it will be necessary to give the prosecutor the opportunity of having counsel on his side as well. That is quite understood, but, even with that addition, I believe this concession to the rights of the soldier may have a very good effect in doing away with some impression of inequality which at present exists.

Mr. HANBURY said, he could not see anything in the Bill which would give the prisoner the right of having counsel, although this clause dealt with the conditions under which counsel might appear, if they did appear. He should like to know what was included in the title "counsel." He did not agree with his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Lockwood) in objecting to the presence of solicitors. His idea was that as little expense as possible ought to be thrown upon the soldier, and he was afraid that, if the appearance of counsel was limited to the appearance of barristers, soldiers who had charges brought against them would have to engage both a solicitor and a barrister.

Mr. M'CLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked whether, if a prisoner was unable to provide lawyer's fees, a counsel or a solicitor would be provided for him by the War Office Authorities?

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, that he believed it was the rule in Civil Courts where a prisoner could not provide counsel of his own for the Judge to provide one for him. He wished to understand whether a soldier who was unable to pay counsel was to be left undefended?

Admiral FIELD pointed out that in the case of a Naval Court Martial the prisoner might have a "friend" who might be a solicitor or a barrister. If the word "counsel" did not cover "solicitors," he thought that the words "or solicitor" ought to be inserted.

Mr. A. C. MORTON urged that a prisoner ought to be allowed to be represented by a solicitor.

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir C. Russell, Hackney, S.) said, the object of the provision was to give the prisoner a right to employ counsel. Section 70 of the Army Act gave the authority there mentioned power to make Rules to regulate the procedure at Courts Martial. Rules had been framed under that section which had the authority of an Act of Parliament, and which provided that a prisoner might have a person to assist him at his trial, whether he was his legal adviser or any other person. Such person might be a counsel or a layman or a solicitor. The authority of that person was, however, limited, as he could not directly cross-examine nor directly address the Court. The Rules which qualified the right to have the prisoner represented by counsel were Rules giving the opportunity to those who were charged with the prosecution of being similarly represented. It seemed to be feared that if counsel appeared for the prisoner he might overbear the non-legal tribunal before which he appeared, and, therefore, it was only fair to have counsel. It was suggested that counsel might be an expensive luxury. That was so. The hon. Member was right in suggesting that the employment of counsel involved the employment of a solicitor to instruct counsel. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) had considered the matter, and was quite willing to carry out the suggestion that "counsel" should cover the employment of solicitors. It was a mistake to suggest that Judges usually named counsel to defend prisoners. It was only in regard to capital offences that it was the rule for Judges to nominate counsel to appear. The practice was not uniform on the subject, but Judges sometimes nominated counsel to appear in other serious cases. There were, however, many serious cases tried in which the prisoners were undefended, and in such cases there was a great deal of force in the observation made by some hon. Gentlemen that the prisoner would not be so badly off even if he had no counsel, because those representing the prosecution would be careful to represent the case fairly and like honourable gentlemen. He had had experience of Courts Martial, and the cases had been very rare, so far as they had come under his notice, in which any injustice had been done to prisoners by reason of their being undefended.

Colonel LOCKWOOD said, he should be sorry that the Attorney General should think that he at all concurred in the view which had been expressed that solicitors should appear instead of counsel. He thought the employment of solicitors would be an extremely objectionable practice, and he was sorry to hear that an Amendment was to be adopted on that point.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 7 agreed to.

*Mr. GIBSON BOWLES moved the following New Clause:—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 6, sub-section (1).)

"In sub-section one, paragraph (k), of section six of the Army Act, the words 'if an officer to be cashiered or to suffer such less punishment as is in this Act mentioned, and if a soldier' shall be omitted."

He said, that in Section 6 of the Army Act certain penalties were imposed for certain offences, such as striking a sentinel, breaking into a house or other place in search of plunder, &c. An officer who was found guilty of any of these offences had to be cashiered or suffer less punishment, but escaped imprisonment, while a soldier who was found guilty of one of them had to be imprisoned or punished in some other way. It seemed to him that the officer and the soldier should be placed on the same footing with regard to offences of this character.

Clause (Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 6, sub section (1),)—(*Mr. Gibson Bowles*,)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think there is any necessity for the change proposed by the hon. Member. A different scale of punishment is laid down in the Act with reference to soldiers from that applicable to officers. In the case of officers the punishments are, first, death, then penal servitude, then imprisonment, and then cashiering. In the case of soldiers they are, first, death, then penal servitude, then imprisonment, and then discharge with ignominy. Cashiering is regarded as a most terrible punishment to inflict upon an officer. It means ruin for life, and is a much more serious punishment than is the punishment to a soldier of imprisonment or discharge with ignominy. To cashier an officer is to inflict the most frightful penalty upon him.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, he would not press the clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. HANBURY moved the following New Clause:—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 46, sub-section (6).)

"In sub-section six of section forty-six of the Army Act, for the words 'the accused person may demand that the evidence against him should be taken on oath' shall be substituted the words 'the evidence against him shall be taken on oath.'"

He thought the evidence should be taken on oath. Under the law as it stood the evidence could not be so taken unless the accused demanded it; but under the circumstances in which he appeared, the burden ought not to be thrown upon him of demanding that the evidence should be taken on oath, as he might think he might give offence to his superiors by preferring this request. It should be taken on oath, whether the prisoner demanded it or not. They did not throw upon the civilian the necessity of demanding that the evidence should be taken on oath, and they ought not to do so in the case of the soldier. He begged to move the Amendment.

Clause (Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 46, sub-section (6),)—(*Mr. Hanbury*,)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, there was no doubt, *primâ facie*, much apparently to be said for the general principle which the hon. Member laid down, but he believed the Amendment would be unworkable, undesirable, and unnecessary. He had made careful inquiry into this matter from officers well acquainted with the working of the system, and they repudiated all idea that the fear of offending the Commanding Officer would prevent a soldier from demanding that the evidence should be taken on oath. In simple cases, such as that of drunkenness, in which in nine cases out of ten the man at once acknowledged his offence and expressed his regret for his misbehaviour, it was not necessary that they should go through the formality of swearing witnesses, and the plan proposed would afford no protection to the soldier at all. The officers were just as humane, as well disposed to the soldier, and as anxious to remove from his mind any idea of injustice as any hon. Member in the House, and the officers told him that this Amendment would be rather an incumbrance, and of no practical value to the soldier.

Mr. A. C. MORTON remarked that a Commanding Officer had a great deal more power than a Police Magistrate, and if it was necessary that the evidence before a Police Magistrate should be taken on oath, there was a double necessity in the case of soldiers, because they had no appeal whatever from the Commanding Officer. He held that in these cases there should be either a declaration or an oath of some sort which would remind the witness that he might be punished if he did not tell the truth.

Sir A. HAYTER (Walsall) was understood to say that if the soldier considered he had been improperly punished he had the right of appeal to a Court Martial, where the evidence was given on oath.

Motion negatived.

Mr. HANBURY moved the following New Clause :—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic, c. 58, s. 48, sub-sec. (6).)

"In sub-section six of section forty-eight of the Army Act, after the words 'penal servitude' shall be inserted the words 'or imprisonment for more than twelve months.'"

This Amendment, he said, was to remove an inconsistency in the Act as it stood. It stated that a District Court Martial should not have power to award penal servitude, but should have power to award a sentence of two years' imprisonment with hard labour. Two years' hard labour was about the most severe sentence that could be passed, and men often asked for five years' penal servitude rather than undergo a sentence of 18 months' with hard labour. If a Court Martial was not trusted to award the comparatively lenient sentence of three years penal servitude it was ridiculous that they should have the power of inflicting the most severe punishment that could be inflicted on a man. They should not be able to go beyond the limit of a sentence of one year's hard labour.

Clause (Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 48, sub-sec. (6),)—(*Mr. Hanbury*,)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN was quite aware of the severe nature of a sentence of two years' imprisonment with hard labour, and if that was a sentence which was common, then the point raised by the hon. Member would be deserving of consideration. But, as a matter of fact, it was a sentence that was very seldom awarded. At the same time, importance was attached to the power of awarding even so heavy a sentence as that. There were certain cases which it was not desirable to send to a General Court Martial which were tried by a District Court Martial, and which were cases deserving of severe punishment, such as cases of a disgraceful character. This power of inflicting so heavy a sentence was found to act as a deterrent against offences of that sort, and it was important to have this weighty penalty, as it were, in reserve. As to the sentences of more than a year's imprisonment, the Queen's Regulations laid it down that so severe a punishment as that of over a year should only be given to offences of the most serious kind, and that this merciful injunction was exercised might be judged from the fact that in 1893, out of 6,953 District Court Martials, only 83 sentences extended beyond a year, and of these 22 were subsequently reduced to one year or under, so that only 61 men underwent more than one year's incarceration. On the whole, the Amendment would involve an increase in the number of heavy punishments, because a larger number of cases would have to go to the Court Martial, which might be more severe than was needed for the preservation of discipline.

Mr. HANBURY said, his idea was that the officers presiding at these Courts Martial might be led to the conclusion that the sentence of two years' hard labour was not such a severe sentence after all. If, however, the right hon. Gentleman would promise that the matter should be brought prominently before the officers he would not raise any further objection.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, that the officers who presided at the Courts Martial knew the Rules and Regulations which governed their proceedings, and in the Queen's Regulations they were enjoined that so severe a punishment as over one year's imprisonment should only be inflicted in very grave cases.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER moved an Amendment in sub-section 1, section 62, of the principal Act, to insert the word "military" before the word "prison." The hon. Member explained that the object of the Amendment was to provide that soldiers convicted of military offences should not be sent to the ordinary criminal gaols. It was most disastrous to this branch of the Service that soldiers who were punished for offences which were not offences against the moral or civil law should be sent to the ordinary criminal gaols, where they had to mix with the most debased criminals. The effect of imprisonment in such gaols was such as to wreck their prospects in life, and a change in this system was urgently needed.

Amendment proposed, in sub-section 1, section 2, of the principal Act, to insert the word "military" before the word "prison."—(*Mr. Arnold-Forster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'military' be there inserted."

Mr. HANBURY, who said he had a similar Amendment, supported that of the hon. Member for West Belfast. His own Amendment, he said, proposed to omit the words in section 135 of the Army Act, "or sentenced to be discharged from the Service with ignominy," and referred to sentences of penal servitude, but that of the hon. Member referred to even shorter sentences. Clause 135 of the Army Act distinctly said that soldiers convicted of purely military offences should be imprisoned in military prisons, and only when they were guilty of distinctly civil offences were they to be sent to a criminal prison. It was grossly unfair that a soldier convicted of an offence for which he would not be punished if he were a civilian should be sent to herd with criminals in a common criminal gaol, and such a system led to disastrous results. A distinction in this regard was clearly laid down in the Act of 1881, but in 1889 an Amendment was introduced into this House and passed *sub silentio* late at night, the effect of which was that all prisoners discharged with ignominy by Court Martial should be sent to a criminal prison. He believed that the interests of the soldier in the matter had been sacrificed to the interests of economy, and that prisoners, who before were sent to a military prison, and who were guilty of no civilian crime whatever, were now sent to the ordinary criminal prisons on the score of cheapness. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would accept an Amendment in the direction in which the present Amendment proceeded.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, that no soldiers were sent to civil prisons except those who had, in the first place, committed some offence which in ordinary life would be called criminal, and, in the second place, those who were discharged from the Service with ignominy. To be discharged with ignominy was not the only way of being discharged from the Army, but was a very severe punishment inflicted upon soldiers, and a man discharged with ignominy was not to be taken back into the Army again. To send such a man to a military prison would have this effect. He being hardened in discipline and an objectionable man in every way would have ample opportunity of corrupting those young military prisoners who were guilty of very minor offences, and so would do serious harm to discipline amongst them.

No man was discharged with ignominy unless he had proved himself a most undesirable soldier, and had probably been convicted again and again of breaches of discipline. They did not want such a man as a military prisoner, because there were other men imprisoned for offences which, though serious military offences, did not attach any moral degradation or moral blame in the ordinary civilian point of view. They sent to military prisons all who had committed comparatively small breaches of discipline, and they sent to civil prisons those who were not only capable of being treated as criminals, but also those who, in regard to discipline, were really dangerous men and who had been discharged from the Army with ignominy.

Mr. HANBURY observed that the amendment to the Act of 1881, which allowed persons to be discharged with ignominy for purely military offences, was clearly against the intention of Parliament previously arrived at, and was passed without the knowledge of the House after 12 o'clock at night.

Mr. BRODRICK remarked that the whole matter was carefully debated and considered by Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee, and the opinion of the House was pronounced upon it.

Question put, and negatived.

Mr. HANBURY moved the following New Clause :—

(Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 180, sub-sec. (2).

In Sub-section two of Section one hundred and eighty of the Army Act, the words "being natives of India" shall be omitted.

The sub-section as it stood seemed to draw a distinction between the natives of India and any man of white blood serving in the Army. In his opinion there ought to be no distinction between the men of different races serving in the same Army. If it was the fact that this Act relieved from certain responsibility and punishment men of European blood serving in that Army, and did not exempt natives of India, it was drawing a distinction which ought not to be drawn. He was told on good authority that flogging existed in Her Majesty's Indian Forces, but he was told that owing to the operation of the Army Act and the insertion of the words "being natives of India," the native in the Indian Forces was liable to flogging and the white man was not. If that was so, it was a most invidious and most unjustifiable distinction. The natives of India were as amenable to discipline as any people in the world, and if flogging was a bad thing for Englishmen, it was also bad for the natives of India. They should either abolish flogging altogether or treat all races within their Army upon the same footing. It was a monstrous thing that flogging should be retained even for the natives in the Indian Forces. The negroes in the West Indian Regiments could not be flogged, and it ought not to be in the power of anyone to inflict such punishment upon the natives of India. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman, now his attention had been called to this matter, would see that it was remedied.

Clause (Amendment of 44 & 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 180, sub-sec. (2),—(*Mr. Hanbury*,)—brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.) said, that the Army (Annual) Bill did not apply to Her Majesty's Forces in India who were natives of India, they being governed by the Indian Army Act and the Indian Articles of War. The power of the Indian Government to create that Code was originally created by the Government of India Act, 1833, and was now vested in the Viceroy and the Legislative Council. What they had now before them was the Act of 1869. There had been no Act passed in India since 1869. At that time, of course, flogging then prevailed in the English Army. It had, however, been abolished since 1869, but there had been no legislation whatever in India upon the subject of the Army since 1869, therefore the question had not been raised in the Government of India. As to the question of flogging, he was not going to differ with the hon. Gentleman as to the desirability of there being no distinction between any of Her Majesty's soldiers, whether natives of India or Great Britain. He found, as a matter of fact, from the most experienced officers, that the punishment of flogging had gone into disuse to a great extent in the Indian Army. Nevertheless, his attention having been directed to the matter, he would also call the attention of the Government of India to it. Any alteration of the law in the Government of India would have to be made by an Act passed in India.

Mr. HANBURY: Is it the fact that the Indian Articles of War do not affect white men serving in India?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: No.

Mr. HANBURY: Not at all?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: No.

Mr. HANBURY said, if the right hon. Gentleman would give an undertaking to use his influence in the direction of putting a stop to flogging in the Indian Army he would not press this matter.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Lest there should be any misapprehension between myself and my hon. Friend on this question I should like to repeat that what I said was that I would communicate with the Government of India on the subject, and ascertain what their views are. It will be for the Government of India to take the initiative in the matter, and carry out the Acts. I will lose no time in communicating with them, and stating the view expressed by the hon. Member with the general approval of the House.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 131.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he had considered the report made by the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland? They also, as well as the Bar of Ireland, occupied some portion of the building of the Four Courts, and they were of opinion they had a claim upon this fund for necessary improvements. The right hon. Gentleman, he believed, had indicated that he did not regard the matter as one that could be brought under the authority of the Bill. It might be satisfactory to the Law Society if the right hon. Gentleman would state what view he took.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) thought it would not be possible within the scope of this Bill to include anything like a further advance from this suitors' fund for the purpose indicated by the demand of the Incorporated Law Society. His hon. Friend would observe from the drawing of the Bill that there was a contingent liability which might fall upon the British Treasury in respect to any expenditure over the £15,000 provided in the Bill. The Government had no authority to impose that liability on the British Treasury, and the object of the Incorporated Law Society was one, so far as he understood it, which could not be met by means of this Bill.

Mr. J. MORLEY then moved a formal Amendment in Clause 1, page 2, line 15, after "King's Inn," to insert "and the Judges of the Supreme Court."

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.) inquired whether any special accommodation was to be obtained for the members of the Press in the Courts in Dublin?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think I said, in answer to a question put to me earlier in to-day's proceedings, that the demand for adequate accommodation for the members of the Press does not refer to the Library, but to the accommodation in the Courts, and that, of course, is not a matter with which this Bill is concerned.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: Then, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh.*)

MR. J. MORLEY: I ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw this Motion. The question raised by the hon. Gentleman is not one which this Bill governs.

MR. SEXTON said, no doubt the Bill was only concerned with the Library. As he understood the question, it was not a question of structural alterations for providing the accommodation, but whether in the Courts as they were now constructed and arranged certain seats should or should not be reserved for the representatives of the Press. He did not himself see how the Bill could deal with that matter. It was only a question of how the accommodation which at present existed should be apportioned among the members of the Press and others. He thought his hon. Friend would be willing not to press his Motion for Progress if the right hon. Gentleman would represent to the authorities, whoever they were, who had the power of apportioning the space in the Courts among the members of the Press and others, that the Press did not consider the present accommodation satisfactory.

MR. J. MORLEY: It is for the Judges to grant better accommodation to the Press if they find themselves able to do so. I will take care that the representations made and opinions expressed in this House, that it is desirable that the Press should have better accommodation, are conveyed to the Judges.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) thought it might be advisable to make some slight structural alterations in the Courts for the accommodation of the reporters. Hitherto they had only had places by the courtesy of the solicitors and some other gentlemen, and they had no definite accommodation of their own in the Courts. A very slight alteration in the arrangements would supply the requisite accommodation. The difficulty had largely arisen from the fact that a new branch had been added to the training of law students. They were now required to attend in Court and take notes of cases, and they had appropriated the seats which were heretofore occupied by the reporters.

MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) said, the members of the Press in Dublin had brought this lack of accommodation before the Lord Chief Justice, who brought it before the Judges, and he had already in his two Courts of the Queen's Bench provided accommodation for the Press. The members of the Press had since then held a meeting at which they passed a unanimous vote of thanks to the Lord Chief Justice for the course he had adopted, and they expressed the hope that the Lord Chancellor and the other Judges might see their way to act in the same manner.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: I accept the promise of the Chief Secretary that adequate accommodation will be provided.

MR. J. MORLEY: I did not say that adequate accommodation would be provided, but I said that I would take care that the representations made and the opinions expressed by some Members of this House that better accommodation should be provided for the representatives of the Press should be conveyed to the proper quarter.

Motion (*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh*), by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment (*Mr. J. Morley*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered upon Thursday.

RELIGIOUS TESTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 48.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh.*)

*MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): object to the possibility of a Jesuit being Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Objection being taken, Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LAND ACTS (IRELAND).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed 'to inquire into and report upon the principles and practice of the Irish Land Commissioners and County Court Judges in carrying out the fair rent and free sale provisions of the Land Acts of 1870, 1881, and 1887, and of the Redemption of Rent Act of 1891, and to suggest such improvements in Law or practice as they may deem to be desirable.'"—(*Mr. J. Morley.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) observed, that it would be in the recollection of the House that a discussion took place the other night upon the Adjournment of the House in connection with this Motion. He could not help feeling that they discussed it under circumstances which made it natural that a misunderstanding should arise as to the Motion. It was represented by some that there was a desire to prevent the Committee being appointed, and that the block to the Motion was put down for no other purpose than to stop investigation into the working of the Irish Land Acts. From such inquiries as he had been able to make from those who had put down notices of objection, he was able to say that no such intention was ever entertained by them. They did desire that there should be some discussion as to the terms of the Reference before the Reference was agreed to, but they never expressed in this House nor entertained the slightest desire that the inquiry should be burked. He would point out that on last Wednesday a Land Bill was brought forward with far-reaching proposals with regard to Irish land tenure, which passed its Second Reading, and it was thought by many Members of the House that it was not consistent with the conduct of Parliamentary business that the House at the same time should be occupied upstairs with the discussion of the principles and practice of the Land Acts, and occupied downstairs with a Bill on the same subject. He had always expressed his desire that the Committee should be appointed, and he thought that his hon. Friends would be well advised, in view of the erroneous interpretation which had been put upon their action, to withdraw their opposition. What they wanted was a Committee to make the inquiry as soon as possible. He did not believe that any serious progress could be made with the Bill read a second time on Wednesday pending the inquiry which was to be held. As an expression of opinion had been given on the last occasion on which the matter was before the House that the Bill would not be proceeded with pending the Report of the Committee, he would suggest that there should be no further block to the Motion for the appointment of the Committee.

Motion agreed to.

LONDON STREETS AND BUILDINGS BILL.

Mr. Kimber, Dr. Hunter, Mr. Lough, Captain Sinclair, Mr. Whitmore, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley were nominated Members of the Select Committee on the London Streets and Buildings Bill.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

FEUS AND BUILDING LEASES (SCOTLAND).

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Feus and Leases (Scotland), in Session 1893-4, be referred to the Select Committee on Feus and Building Leases (Scotland).—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (1894-5).

Copy ordered—

"Of Statement of Revenue and Expenditure as laid before the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when opening the Budget."—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 68.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act for Amending the Law with respect to the Time for holding Midsummer Quarter Sessions." [Quarter Sessions (Midsummer) Bill [Lords].]

QUARTER SESSIONS (MIDSUMMER) BILL [*Lords*].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 162.]

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &c.

Lords Message [12th April] relative to the appointment of a Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, &c., considered.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Six Members be appointed to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords (as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of the 12th April), to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Committee nominated of :—Mr. Ambrose, Mr. Bryce, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Howell, and Mr. Solicitor General.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Merchant Shipping Bill,—That they do concur with this House in their Resolution "That it is expedient that the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons," as desired by this House; and have further Resolved, That it is expedient that the said Committee be the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills.

Lords Message to be considered forthwith.

Resolved, That this House doth concur with the Lords in their further Resolution.

Ordered, That the Merchant Shipping Bill be committed to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

COMMONS ACT, 1876 (LUTON COMMONS).

Paper [presented 13th April] to be printed. [No. 66.]

DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES.

Return [presented 13th April] to be printed. [No. 67.]

ARMY (MILITIA).

Copy presented,—of Further Regulations relating to the Militia [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (RESERVE).

Copy presented,—of Further Regulations relating to the Army Reserve [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FOREIGN TRADE.

Copy presented,—of Statistical Tables relating to the Progress of the Foreign Trade of the United Kingdom and of other Countries in recent years; with Report to the Board of Trade thereon [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY TREASURER'S FEE FUND (IRELAND).

Account presented,—for the year ended 25th March 1894 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

AMERICAN MAIL SERVICE.

Return presented,—relative thereto (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 170, of Session 1893) [ordered 4th April; *Sir John Leng*]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC RECORDS (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM).

Copy presented,—of Schedule of Documents in the Offices of the Clerk of the Peace for the City of Birmingham which are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation in the Public Record Office [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented,—of Minute of the 17th April, 1894, by the Committee of Council on Education, modifying Article 73 of the Day School Code (1894) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 17th April 1894.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed. (No. 24.)

Lord **SANDHURST** gave notice that he would on Thursday move the suspension of the Standing Orders with a view to passing the Bill through all its stages forthwith, so that it might receive the Royal Assent on Monday.

The Marquess of **SALISBURY**: I am loth to comment on the voice and tone of the noble Lord, but that is rather an important Motion, and I hope the House understands that if there are any Amendments proposed in the Bill objection must be taken to the Motion of the noble Lord. I have none of my own.

Lord **SANDHURST** said, he did not propose to provoke any controversy upon the Bill in their Lordships' House.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS, AND WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT, 1889 (SCHEME FOR THE COUNTY OF ANGLESEY).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

The Bishop of **BANGOR** moved—

> "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent from the Scheme for the administration of the funds applicable to the intermediate and technical education of the inhabitants of the County of Anglesey."

He said, the Scheme had been framed in pursuance of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, which was passed as a compromise between two conflicting opinions at the time. Under the Act a Joint Committee was constituted, and proposals for a Scheme were made by a Joint Committee, three members of which were appointed by the County Council and two by Her Majesty's Government, and afterwards submitted to the Charity Commissioners to be drafted and put into shape with or without modification; and the Scheme was finally approved by the Committee of Council on Education. If those three bodies had treated those who differed from them as to the details of this Scheme for the county with some fair amount of sympathy and consideration, there would be no necessity for him to call attention to the matter. The chief blame he threw on the Charity Commissioners, who, although they sent down an Assistant Commissioner to hear the views of the trustees, paid no attention to their representations. The Charity Commissioners had adopted throughout an uncompromising attitude, much to be regretted, because it had estranged the sympathies of many who had the educational interests of the locality closely at heart. What were the objections? There were two main objections to the Scheme, the first relating to the Head Master, and the second to the existing hereditary feoffees of Hughes's Charity, Beaumaris. Under the Scheme the Head Master, who had for many years conducted the school with considerable success, would find his income reduced from £600 to £300 a year or less. No compensation had been offered him, and he had not been treated in an equitable manner. Two new bodies were to be created, one the County Governing Authority and the other the Local Governing Body, the former holding the purse, and, in fact, having the power of appointing and dismissing the Head Master. But how did the Scheme deal with the existing trustees? They did not claim that they should be a majority of the County Governing Body, but only that they should have a voice in the future management of the charity. The Scheme, however, swept away the existing trustees altogether, and did not give them a single representative. They only asked that they should have, say, two representatives; if even one had been offered they should have been satisfied. He had discussed this matter with many extreme Radicals, but he had never found one who defended this action, and he was anxious to hear whether any Member of Her Majesty's Government would defend their action in sweeping away the existing trustees. The Scheme was unjust to the Head Master, and most unjust to the present trustees, and accordingly he submitted that it should be rejected by their Lordships. Objection had been made that delay would be caused; but practically the delay would only be for a few months, and the Scheme would be brought into working order next year. It was difficult for Churchmen in Wales to help in the promotion of intermediate and higher education, and for this reason—that wherever there was a body with a majority even of one against them Churchpeople would be excluded from their fair share in the formation of these institutions, and he was afraid that of late Her Majesty's Government had given some support to that narrow and exclusive policy. All he could say was that, in spite of all this, they had done and would do their utmost at all times to obtain a Scheme under which they should have fair representation.

Moved—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent from the Scheme for the administration of the funds applicable to the intermediate and technical education of the inhabitants of the County of Anglesey."—(*The Lord Bishop of Bangor.*)

*Lord PLAYFAIR said, the right rev. Prelate had moved his Motion in a very temperate speech, and he hoped to convince him that it was not necessary or desirable to ask their Lordships to take a Division upon this Scheme, because it was in no respect different from the others which the House had already confirmed, especially the Carnarvon Scheme, in which the noble Marquess opposite took very considerable interest. The next Scheme contained a clause which was outside the Welsh Intermediate Act with regard to religious observance, but here there was no such clause; it was all within the statutory powers which their Lordships joined in passing in 1889 for the promotion of intermediate education in Wales. The Beaumaris Grammar School Endowment was formed so long ago as 1603. It was an extremely liberal plan at that time, there being no restriction as to localities. There were no religious observances to be followed. There was nothing said about religious instruction except the fact that the Bishop of Bangor was to be *ex officio* one of the trustees of the school, and was also to give approval to the Regulations under which it was conducted, and this might be said to amount by implication to a sort of stipulation as to the kind of religion that was to be taught. For 50 years afterwards nothing was added to the foundation in regard to religion. The amount of the endowment was £900. The great difficulty in promoting intermediate education in Wales was that the amount of the endowments was so small compared with that of the educational endowments of England. In Anglesey the total endowment amounted to £2,220. Originally, the Scheme proposed by the Joint Committee was that only £330 should be given to the school at Beaumaris, but that was thought by the Charity Commissioners to be too little, and one-half of the endowment was given to the school. The Intermediate Education Act said that endowments were to be used for the benefit of the county at large and not of any particular school, and under the Scheme the benefits of the endowments were to be extended to schools at Holyhead and Llangefni, at which 160 boys and 100 girls were to be taught. It was quite true that none of the trustees of the existing schools were to be upon the county government. How could they be with any propriety? They had ceased to have any educational functions whatever, and all they would now have to do was to manage the almshouses which were part of the original foundation. They had, however, two representatives on the Local Governing Body of the Beaumaris school. The Bishop of Bangor was *ex officio* a trustee of Beaumaris school, but in the general county system into which that school had been merged there were no Bishops as *ex officio* representatives, and therefore the right rev. Prelate could not be placed on the new Governing Body in that capacity. The Charity Commissioners had no power to give the Head Master of the school compensation, but they did the best they could for him by making him the Head Master of the school under the new arrangement. He did not think the question of religious teaching came into this case with any strength—it would, no doubt, in the next Scheme to come before their Lordships. There was nothing in this Scheme with reference to religious education which had not been in the Schemes already passed by the House, and it was exactly on all-fours with the Carnarvon Scheme, in which the further difficulty occurred that it comprised a school founded by the Dean of Bangor, but the House thought it should be treated as a County School in the General County Scheme.

THE BISHOP OF BANGOR said, in that case he had objected to the County Authority forming part of the Governing Body.

LORD PLAYFAIR hoped, as on that occasion the right rev. Prelate did not go to a Division on the question, he also would refrain from doing so in regard to this Scheme, affecting intermediate education in one of the most important counties in Wales, and there being nothing in it contrary to the principles which had guided the House on previous occasions.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY said, he would not add anything as to the injustice to the Head Master, or that done by disturbing this school, which had performed good work for nearly 300 years, for the very problematical benefit to be derived from this new Scheme. The large number of Governors for the various schools was unsatisfactory, and in one instance of late at the Bangor College considerable scandal had arisen through the action of the Governors. The promotors of the Scheme appeared not to have calculated how far their money would go, and were too ambitious, while they would pay small salaries though requiring high qualifications, and imposing hard conditions. The Governors appointed by the County Council would be able to interfere too much in the school management; and what was the use of the daughters of Anglesey farmers learning French and other modern languages? though those subjects might be of use to the boys as commercial travellers. The noble Lord had said the endowment was worth £2,220, but the Scheme did not mention more than £1,207, and a low calculation of expenses, for masters, mistresses, and so on, came out at £1,680 to £1,860, without taking into consideration either taxes, repairs, or insurance. The Scheme contemplated the possibility of the trustees of the Hugh Hughes Charity Bequest giving £1,000 to the Holyhead Building Fund, but the late Attorney General (Sir R. Webster) had drawn up a Scheme for that charity, which the trustees could not alter.

*THE EARL OF CRANBROOK: My Lords, I have great sympathy with what has been said by the right rev. Prelate, but I am quite unable to see any ground for upsetting this Scheme, which has been prepared in the ordinary way, and is in conformity with other Schemes which have been passed by this House without objection. I regret very much that the Master should have doubt as to his future income, but the Charity Commissioners should under their great powers have a mission to devise a proper distribution of the educational endowments. With regard to the trustees appointed to form a Local Body for the government of the school in Beaumaris, the old feoffees will, to a certain extent, be represented. Parliament has given the Charity Commissioners power to deal with these educational endowments, and I understand that in this case they have extended the benefits to the whole county, reserving a certain part for the existing school at Beaumaris, which is not very large. I am afraid that, under all these Schemes passed by the Charity Commissioners, there will always be a sore feeling among those who would seem to be dispossessed. But in this case it seems to me there is no such special ground for putting an end to a Scheme which has been so elaborately prepared, which has gone through all the forms of examination required, and is, at the end, in conformity with the plan which has been adopted by this House.

On question, resolved in the negative.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS, AND WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT, 1889, (SCHEME FOR THE COUNTY OF FLINT.)

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

THE BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent to the following portion of the Flintshire Education Scheme: Clause 93, Sub-section (*b*), from the word 'boarding house' to the end, and the whole of Sub-section (*c*)."

He said that, before coming to the Motion, he desired to point out that the Welsh Intermediate Education Act was in principle and purpose accepted by both political Parties, and it was a matter of regret that in the administration of that Act provisions had been put forth in some of the County Schemes which were at variance with the spirit and intention of the Act itself. The Motion which he proposed would not delay the adoption of this particular County Scheme by one day, while it would, in his opinion, greatly improve that Scheme in principle and practice. Fortunately, his Motion was word for word the same as the Amendment passed by that House on the 4th of last September in the case of the Merionethshire Scheme, and he only asked the House to re-affirm their decision in the case of Flintshire. The provisions omitted in the Merionethshire Scheme, and which he now proposed should be omitted in the Flintshire Scheme, introduced the undenominational system of religious teaching and worship into boarding houses. The system was distinctly and decisively rejected in another place when the Welsh Act was discussed in Committee on July 23, 1889. The provisions which he proposed to omit attempted to set aside that decision. The following were sections (*b*) and (*c*) of Clause 93 of the Flint Scheme, with the words he proposed to omit enclosed in brackets—

> "(*b*) Christian family worship shall be held daily in the hostel or boarding house, [but in the family worship so held the formularies of any particular denomination shall not be used.
>
> "(*c*) In the course of any general Christian religious teaching given in the hostel or boarding house the formularies of any particular denomination shall not be used, nor shall the distinctive tenets of any particular denomination be taught, provided that the person in charge of a boarding house, if the county governing so allow, and subject to any regulation they may make on the subject, may, separately from such general religious teaching (if any), give, either by himself or by deputy, religious instruction of a denominational character, but only to those scholars whose parents have, in writing, expressed a wish for such instruction."]

The question of the religious teaching of boarders was left to be regulated in Wales, as in England, by Clause 16 of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. He could not recall the provisions of that Act in any better way than by quoting the words used by the late Mr. W. E. Forster when he introduced the Second Reading of the Act of 1869—

> "But while," he said, "we give the greatest possible power and latitude to the parents to ensure that they may share the advantage of these public schools without having their religious views interfered with, we have also borne this in mind—that the position of day and boarding schools is very different. The master of a day school has the care and superintendence of the boys while they are in the school, but the parents have the real charge of their moral and spiritual welfare. But, when you send a boy to a boarding school, you give the master the trust and the responsibility of superintending the moral and spiritual teaching of the boy in your place."

This was the principle of the Act of 1869, and was the principle admitted in the Act of 1873. It was admitted after a distinct proposal to the contrary in the Welsh Intermediate Act. Surely no principle could have received more distinct and decisive legislative expression. This principle and compact were of such commanding importance that if it was to be set aside the question ought to be dealt with openly and deliberately in Parliament, and such a revision of the Scheme ought not to be adroitly slipped into a corner of the Scheme for a Welsh county, and so permitted to be decreed by authority. This was not a Welsh question merely. It was not a question of the Welsh Act alone, but it was a deliberate and repeated attempt to set aside the principle and distinct provisions of the Act of 1869. In the Debate, when a similar Amendment was moved to the Merionethshire Scheme, the noble Lord on the Woolsack said that these provisions, if passed, would not destroy religious belief or promote infidelity, and that the difficulties would be more imaginary than real. The family worship which was prohibited any definite or denominational expression of its faith was, he thought, hardly likely to conduce to the strengthening of religious belief in the mind and heart of a boy. His experience, as Head Master of one of the largest schools in Wales, would induce him to plead for absolute freedom of contract in the religious teaching of boarders between master and parent. The difficulties of such freedom were more imaginary than real. He failed to understand why an attempt to upset the compact of 1869 should again be thrust into one of the Welsh Schemes after it had been deliberately excluded from the Welsh Act of 1869 and also in the Merionethshire Scheme. He appealed to their Lordships to uphold the principle of the Act of 1869, and to mark with their disapprobation this persistent and most ill-advised attempt to introduce into our educational system a change of far-reaching importance by a side wind. If the question of the religious teaching of boarders in our public schools was to be raised, let it be raised openly, so that all might know what was really being proposed.

Moved—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her Assent to the following portion of the Flintshire Education Scheme :—Clause 93, sub-section (*b*), from the word 'boarding-house' to the end, and the whole of sub-section (*c*)."—(*The Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.*)

*LORD PLAYFAIR said, the change which the right rev. Prelate had made in the form of his Motion rendered it much more easy to discuss the Scheme before the House. Originally, the proposal of the right rev. Prelate was to reject the whole Scheme, but he was glad that the present proposal was only to reject part of Clause 93.

THE BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH said, that had been put down by mistake. He never intended to propose the rejection of the whole Scheme.

*LORD PLAYFAIR said, he had, of course, taken it in the form in which it appeared on the Paper. It was rather startling, because it so happened that not a particle of opposition had appeared in the County of Flint to the Scheme. Not one of the Governing Bodies of the schools in Flint had made any complaint of the Scheme. The right rev. Prelate was right in saying that Clause 93, which he proposed to amend, was not contained in many of the Schemes which had come before their Lordships. It was, however, in the Merionethshire Scheme, and was rejected by their Lordships' House. The Welsh people naturally have a great desire that they should obtain teaching without formularies and without any distinctive denominational character. The Committee of 1881 pointed out that, although three-fourths of the people of Wales were Nonconformists, the religious services kept up in the grammar schools had appeared to make the pupils of the schools two-thirds Churchmen and only one-third Nonconformists. The maintenance of particular religious services in the schools had prevented Nonconformists receiving higher and secondary education. The Joint Committee appointed by the Flint County Council proposed a more exclusive proposal than that now contained in Clause 93. They proposed that under no condition should there be denominational education in the boarding-house—that there should be Christian teaching, but no formularies or catechisms. That was not accepted by the Department. The Department in this 93rd clause gave permission to the master or head of the boarding-house or lodging-house to give religious education according to his own views provided the parents were willing their children should accept such education. Therefore, they modified the proposal of the County Council considerably, and that was contained in the Merionethshire Scheme which their Lordships rejected. He had only to say that the people of Wales were extremely anxious that there should be no difficulties in regard to the secondary education of the country, and that the compromise which the Education Department had made should not be interfered with. This compromise would enable the Welsh people to obtain education without any of those disqualifying influences which attended the grammar schools before the Education Act was passed. He hoped their Lordships would consider that there had been a fair compromise come to, and would not consent to the mutilation of Clause 93.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, he did not understand that it was proposed to reject the whole of Clause 93, but only one-half of sub-clause (*b*), from the word "boarding-house" to the end.

LORD PLAYFAIR said, that was so.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, that all over England and Wales the Prayer Book of the Church of England was constantly used in family worship, not only by Church people, but by Nonconformists. There were large denominations in which the chief part of the service was selected from the Church Prayer Book, and he was sure that the masters of boarding-houses themselves would feel that their liberty in dealing with the moral and spiritual education of boys in their schools would be seriously interfered with if they were told that they might not use the formularies—even a few of the beautiful Collects, or the Confession contained in the Prayer Book of the Church. If boys going to the boarding-houses found the Prayer Book might not be used, it would cast a considerable slur upon that which at home and in their public worship they had been taught to regard as venerable and sacred from their earliest years. The next stage, then, would be that people would naturally desire to provide boarding-houses for themselves, where Church of England children would be received, and would get the spiritual instruction to which they had been used from their childhood. But this clause positively prevented even that. This clause would prevent the establishment of any school boarding-house in Wales where Church of England boys could be gathered together in worship under a Church of England master. He could speak with considerable experience on this matter. When he was connected with a large school he never knew objection to be taken to the use of the English Prayer Book by Presbyterian or Nonconformist parents, or even by Roman Catholics. If this clause were agreed to, the use of the Church of England Prayer Book for Church of England boys would no longer be permitted, and they would not even be allowed to make a "camp of refuge" for themselves. It would not be possible to gather in a boarding-house children of the Church of England under the instruction of a Church of England teacher, and the Christian religion as brought out in the Church of England formularies of worship would not be allowed to be taught.

*THE BISHOP OF LONDON said, after the remarks made by the Primate, he would only add that forbidding the use of Church of England prayers or any prayers thought suitable for worship amounted to intolerable tyranny. He admitted at once that it was right that in these boarding-houses means should be provided for not putting any at a disadvantage, by placing them under masters and worship of a religion to which they did not belong. But the Scheme provided for such cases, and the Governors were to deal with them whenever they arose. He hoped their Lordships would maintain the liberty of Church of England masters to have family worship according to the Church of England, where it would not of necessity interfere with the worship and teaching of those who did not belong to the Church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

*THE EARL OF CRANBROOK: My Lords, I had hoped from the tone of the remarks of the noble Lord (Lord Playfair) that we should not have been called upon to answer further in this matter. The question really is whether the Endowed Schools Acts are to be ignored, and a proposal, which was negatived in the discussion on the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, should be introduced in this Scheme contrary, if not to the terms, to the spirit of the Acts. At all events, to enact that the formularies of the Church must not be used in schools which may be entirely composed of Church of England pupils is great intolerance—an intolerance which I have never heard proposed before to be imposed upon any subject in this Kingdom. If the thing is to be done, let us take care that it is done by Act of Parliament, and not in the way now proposed. I believe that the arrangement is absolutely illegal, and certainly contrary to the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. The proposal involves a bigotry almost unprecedented, the bigotry of latitudinarianism. Why should a master who wishes to offer thanksgiving be debarred from using the Prayer Book, and be compelled to use words of his own when the formularies of the Church of England would suit his purpose far better? In Scotch Presbyterian churches whole passages from the Church of England Service are constantly used; but in these schools the use of them would be wholly prohibited by this clause. I trust that the noble Earl at the head of the Government will not support this extraordinary proposal, and will not divide the House upon a clause founded on bigotry in a degree I have never seen exampled.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, I am afraid I cannot give the promise which the noble Earl opposite asks, because after the Division which was taken last year on the same subject in this House I should feel compelled to proceed in the same direction this year. I quite admit that the question is not wholly free from complexity; but I would ask your Lordships to consider that the measure under which this Scheme is drawn up is intended, and wisely intended, to give effect to the wishes of the Welsh people. And, after all, this particular Scheme may have blots and faults, but it actually falls short of the wishes of the people of Flintshire as expressed by the Joint Committee formed under the Act. It falls short of their wishes in regard to the exclusion of all formularies. The Government are bound under the Act to respect the wishes of localities in that respect, whether we share those wishes in all their fulness or not. There is another question which arises in my mind. I sympathise very much with what was said first by the Primate, next by the right rev. Prelate, and, lastly, by the noble Earl opposite. I should regret very much any Scheme which would absolutely prevent a person from reading any family or public prayers in a school boarding-house, from using, in short, any prayers that are contained in the Prayer Book. But is it quite certain that this clause to which so much objection has been raised meditates such a complete exclusion as that? The noble Earl who had spoken last practically contradicted his own proposition, because while he declared that this exclusion must be a terrible thing, he at the same time admitted that in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which is not in unity with the Church of England, the prayers of the latter were constantly used. Now, I have taken some pains in trying, but I have been quite unable to discover any definition of the term "formulary," which gives it the sense which is now sought to be put upon it. If interpreted as some noble Lords interpret it, the Lord's Prayer would be excluded from use in school-houses in Wales because it is found within the four corners of the Prayer Book. I venture to think that it would not be a wise course for your Lordships to vote against the clause, and thus to run counter to the deliberate and express wishes of the people of Flintshire, and, what is more, to tie down and bind the word "formulary" to a meaning which, to my mind, it cannot bear.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I hope your Lordships will not endorse the curious principles of statutory interpretation laid down by the noble Earl the Prime Minister. His argument is this: "The Act of 1889 was intended, and wisely intended, to be in accordance with the wishes of the Welsh people. We think this particular provision is in accordance with the wishes of the Welsh people"——

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: We know it is.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I do not know whether you know it justly or not. We have always been refused information as to the wishes of the Welsh people. But that is the argument—"We think it is in accordance with the wishes of the Welsh people and therefore you are bound, under pain of departing from the Act of 1889, to accept our interpretation of it now." There is no Act in the Statute Book which might not be twisted to any purpose to suit the Government of the day if they were to be allowed to say that the Act was intended to operate in accordance with the wishes of the people of a locality, and if their interpretation of the wishes of the locality were to be accepted without demur. Equally little can I accept the final argument of the noble Earl, who said that he was not quite certain that "formularies" mean what the opponents of the clause aver. The noble Earl has apparently asked all the legal luminaries he can find what the word "formulary" means, and has been unable to obtain an answer—nobody knows what it means. Undeterred by that, however, he actually asks your Lordships to put it in the Statute Book and to watch what the result will be. That is not a fair way of dealing with the consciences of the people for whom you are legislating and whom this change would affect, even if those people are in a minority in the population among whom they find themselves. Acts of Parliament ought to be so framed that there can be no doubt as to their meaning. The noble Earl, however, asks your Lordships to put deliberately in this Act an ambiguous phrase, and to do what we believe will be contrary to the spirit and meaning of the Act of 1869, and will result in gross injury to and tyranny over the consciences of the Welsh people; and the only consolation he offers us is that he is not quite certain that our view and interpretation will be correct.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, the discussion has turned entirely upon one portion of the words which the right rev. Prelate proposes to omit, and that the omission shall be confined in that portion to the use of the word "formularies of any particular denomination." The right rev. Prelate proposes also to strike out another provision in Sub-section (*c*), and he desires that the distinctive tenets of any particular denomination shall not be taught unless with the wish of the parents of the children. It seems to me that none of the arguments which have been used by the right rev. Prelate by the most rev. Primate or by any noble Lords who have spoken have furnished any real objection to the clause or have shown that these words should be omitted. They are very important words, and the result of striking them out would, as I understand, be that it would then be possible for the head of a hostel, where the majority of the children might be Nonconformists or might belong to the Church of England, to confine himself to the religious teaching of one particular denomination without reference to the wishes of the parents. That is a more important matter than the question of the use of a particular formulary for family worship.

On question ? their Lordships divided:—Contents 38 ; Not-Contents 24.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Ordered that the said Address be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have appointed a Select Committee of six Members to join with the Select Committee appointed by this House, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of Thursday last, to consider all Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session.

MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL.

Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that the Commons do concur with their Lordships in the further Resolution communicated in their Lordships' message of yesterday relative to the Merchant Shipping Bill.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

Amendments reported (according to Order): Then Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and dispensed with: Bill read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

COPYHOLD (CONSOLIDATION) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 2.)

Referred to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills of the present Session.

COLONIAL OFFICERS (LEAVE OF ABSENCE) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to regulate the conditions as to leave of absence for certain colonial officers—Was presented by the Marquess of Ripon ; read 1ª ; to be printed ; and to be read 2ª on Friday next. (No. 25.)

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 17th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

CROWN LANDS AND COTTAGES.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to the Special Report of the English Land Restoration League, 1893, entitled, *Among the Agricultural Labourers with the Red Vans*, in which it is stated that the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Woods and Forests are the principal landowners and Lords of the Manor of Bishops Cannings, Wilts ; that they let out the land, as other Wiltshire landlords do, in large holdings ; and that they let the cottages with the land, instead of retaining them in their own control and allowing the labourers to hold their cottages from and pay rent to the Crown ; whether he is aware that, in his Report upon the agricultural labourers of Wiltshire, furnished to the Labour Commission, the Assistant Commissioner expresses the opinion that it is desirable, in the interests of labourers, that farmers should not have many cottages at their command ; and that practically the same opinion has been expressed by the other

Assistant Commissioners; and whether he will undertake that on the Crown Estates only such cottages shall be let with the farms as are absolutely necessary for their requirements, and that in the case of cottages so let the Crown shall, as is done on Lord Bristol's Estate in Suffolk (*vide* Report of Mr. Wilson Fox, A.C., page 18), reserve the right of taking possession of them by giving one month's notice in order to prevent any possible improper conduct on the part of the farm tenant towards the cottage tenant?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I have not seen the papers referred to, but I should explain that it is the usual practice on the Crown Agricultural Estates to let with a farm such cottages only as are reasonably needed for the labourers required for the proper working of the farm. That being the case, it is not considered expedient to reserve power to resume possession of such cottages, and such a condition might seriously prejudice the letting of a farm. There is no desire, subject to supplying the wants of a farm, to prevent labourers from taking their cottages direct.

MR. C. HOBHOUSE (Wilts, Devizes): May I ask whether, in reference to these Crown Lands, the right hon. Gentleman will take the first opportunity of providing as far as possible the means for the cottage tenants to obtain plots of land at a reasonable rent?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I am unable to say what powers the Commissioners have to provide holdings for their cottagers, but I will inquire into the matter and inform the hon. Member at an early date.

*MR. YERBURGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Report of the Assistant Commissioner for the Counties of Norfolk and Suffolk states that on Lord Leicester's Estate 1,000 cottages are held by the occupiers direct from the landlord? And is he aware that the same is the case on the Lytham estate in Lancashire?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: That may be so; and I repeat we have no desire, subject to supplying the wants of a farm, to prevent labourers from taking their cottages direct.

SUTHERLANDSHIRE SHERIFF SUBSTITUTE.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether Mr. Charles H. Urquhart, the newly-appointed Sheriff Substitute for Sutherlandshire, has a knowledge of Gaelic?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): Mr. Urquhart was appointed by the Sheriff an Honorary Sheriff Substitute, to act only during the absence of the Sheriff Substitute. He has not a knowledge of Gaelic.

SCOTTISH FISHERY BOARD CRUISER.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state when the additional cruiser for the Scottish Fishery Board, referred to in the Estimates, will be ready; and whether her speed will be greater than, or at least equal to, that of the fastest steam trawlers?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Fishery Board is actively engaged in procuring a steam vessel for the protection of the fisheries on the West Coast. I will inform the hon. Member as soon as the arrangements are completed. The Fishery Board and its professional adviser will satisfy themselves as to a sufficient rate of speed.

INSANITARY CONDITION OF RUABON.

SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the extremely unsanitary state of Ruabon parish, caused by the delay in dealing with the disposal of the sewage of the district, and to the danger to the health and lives of the inhabitants caused thereby; and whether he will take immediate steps to remedy this condition of things?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Local Government Board are aware of the urgent need of a system of sewerage for Ruabon. The Rural Sanitary Authority submitted a scheme, but when the inquiry was held with regard to it by one of the Board's Inspectors considerable objection was offered to the proposal of the Sanitary Authority on the ground of the cost which it would entail. Two alternative schemes have since been considered by the authority, and at their request one of the Inspectors of the Board again visited the district last month. The Board have informed the authority that it appears to them that the scheme originally proposed should be adopted, at the same time suggesting some modifications with a view of diminishing the cost. The Board have no doubt that the Sanitary Authority will come to an early decision in the matter.

UNIVERSAL POSTAL DELIVERY.

MR. WICKHAM (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether there are not only single houses but groups of houses at which the Post Office decline to deliver letters; and, if so, whether he will endeavour to provide that there be at least an occasional delivery for every inhabited house in the United Kingdom?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The hon. Member's statement is quite correct; but the houses which do not enjoy an official delivery of letters are becoming fewer every day, owing to the constant attention which is being given by my Department to the extension of deliveries in rural districts. An arrangement for affording even an occasional delivery at every inhabited house in the United Kingdom, however inaccessible, would, I fear, entail a very heavy outlay and a large addition to the staff, such as I should not feel justified in sanctioning; but if the hon.Member has in his mind any particular house or group of houses that is now excluded from delivery and will let me know particulars, I shall be happy to consider whether the desired accommodation can be afforded.

EX-OFFICERS AND THEIR UNIFORMS.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why officers in the Navy are not permitted on their resignation, involving the loss of retired pay and widows' pension, to retain their rank and wear their uniforms the same as officers in the Army who resign in similar circumstances; and whether, as the removal of this grievance would cost nothing while it would do away with a feeling of injustice experienced by many officers who have spent the best years of their lives in the Navy, the Admiralty will place naval officers in this respect on the same footing as those in the Army?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The questions suggested by my hon. Friend appear to be fully answered by the fact that if an officer resigns his commission in the Navy he ceases to have any connection with Her Majesty's Service. Military officers who resign their commission cannot wear the uniform and retain their rank. The Rule permitting retention of rank and uniform applies to military officers who retire after 15 years' service with gratuity or retired pay.

***SIR J. LENG**: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is the custom to allow naval officers to resign in order to avoid a Court Martial, and that all who do resign, from whatever cause, are under the suspicion that they have resigned to avoid an investigation into their conduct? Is not that the grievance of which the officers have complained?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: I am not aware of that.

AFFRAY BETWEEN WATER BAILIFFS AND FISHERMEN IN MORAY FIRTH.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which, on Tuesday the 3rd instant, a number of water bailiffs attacked some fishermen in the Moray Firth, near Jemimaville, and fired upon them several times; and whether he will state what justification the water bailiffs had for attacking fishermen engaged at sea?

***MR. J. B. BALFOUR**: From the information which I have thus far obtained, it appears that while the water bailiffs appointed by the Conon Fishery District Board were preventing what they believed to be illegal fishing, they were resisted by the fishermen, and one of the bailiffs was badly injured. I learn to-day that the fishermen have been committed for trial for assault, but that no charge has been lodged against the bailiffs. A gun seems to have been discharged in the air by one of the bailiffs without the intention or effect of injuring anyone, but there does not appear to have been any other firing. The whole facts of the case will doubtless be brought out at the trial.

LEWIS PROCURATOR FISCAL.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will state for what services the Procurator Fiscal for the Island of Lewis received the sum of £50 10s. as extra remuneration during the year ended March 31, 1893?

***MR. J. B. BALFOUR**: The sum of £50 represents a commuted allowance paid to the Procurator Fiscal by the County Council of Ross and Cromarty, in respect of services rendered and outlays disbursed by him on travelling expenses and payments to witnesses in connection with criminal investigations conducted by him, which did not result in trial. This arrangement was adopted by the County Council as the best mode of settling payments which were formerly defrayed out of the County Rogue Money. The additional 10s. represents three small fees of 3s. 4d. each due to the Fiscal in respect of three prosecutions to which his concurrence was necessary.

CHEADLE SCHOOLS, STAFFORDSHIRE.

MR. C. M'LAREN (Leicester, Bosworth): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Education Department will take steps to require the managers of the national schools of Cheadle, Staffordshire, to make the structural alterations in their schools without further delay? At the same time, I may also ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in carrying out the requirements of the Education Department, in regard to the National Schools of Cheadle, Staffordshire, the managers are proposing to encroach on the graveyard, either for a playground or any other purpose; and, if so, whether they will receive the sanction of the Department?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The structural defects of these schools were notified to the managers last June, and they informed the Department in September that plans were being prepared to remedy them. Plans were submitted last month, and have since been under revision, and the managers state that the sum required to carry them out is being raised by subscriptions. The Department will see that there is no undue delay in carrying out the work. With regard to the second question asked by the hon. Member, the Department have no information, but I will have inquiry made.

KILLYBEGS PIER.

MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the cause of the delay in the construction of the deep-water pier at Killybegs; and if he is aware that the town and neighbourhood have suffered much loss and inconvenience owing to the demolition of the old quay before the building of a new pier?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: The delay in dealing with the question referred to is due to the fact that no agreement has yet been come to with the Congested Districts Board as to the nature of the work to be undertaken, and the financial arrangements which would be necessary. I am not aware of the circumstances alleged in the second paragraph, and I must point out that a new boat-slip—a convenience never before enjoyed by Killybegs—was built down to low water of spring tides at the time that part of the old pier was absorbed in the station ground.

***MR. DANE**: May I point out that the right hon. Gentleman has not answered my last question? What is the cause of the delay?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: No agreement has been come to with the Congested Districts Board. There is also a legal difficulty.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Is it not a fact that the right hon. Gentleman, so far back as last September, gave a distinct undertaking that this work should be expedited with the utmost possible haste? What is the legal difficulty?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: It is quite true that I expressed a desire that something might be done. The legal difficulty has reference to the powers of the Board of Works and of the Congested Districts Board respectively.

MR. DANE: Having regard to the serious results of this waste of time, will the right hon. Gentleman now do his best to expedite the work?

***SIR J. T. HIBBERT**: Certainly, I am anxious it should be pushed forward, but I fear it will require legislation.

SOUTHERN IRISH COAST FISHERIES.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of delay in laying upon the Table of the House the Report of Her Majesty's Irish Fishery Inspectors respecting the Inquiry held by them in Scotland relative to the fishing by Scotch fishermen off the Southern Irish Coast?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Report has been laid on the Table.

Mr. DANE: I inquired at Dublin Castle the other day, and was informed that it had not been laid.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The hon. Member cannot have heard that, because it was laid on the Table on the 20th of February. Wherever the delay in printing and circulating it has occurred I cannot say. The Irish Office, at any rate, are not responsible.

*Mr. DANE: I was made aware for the first time this morning that it had been laid. Last week, when I called at the Castle, the Secretary to the Fishery Inspectors told me it had not been laid. He promised to ascertain the reason, and he telegraphed to London, I believe, and heard that it had not been so laid. On the evening of my call at the Castle I received a letter from him that same evening stating that it had not been laid.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Well, it was laid on the 20th of February.

Mr. CARSON (Dublin University): Do the Government propose to bring in a Bill dealing with the suggestions contained in the Report?

Mr. J. MORLEY: As soon as we can.

CONSULAR APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. W. ALLEN (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, when the Consulate at Angora was established, and the Vice Consulate at Mossoul revived, the post at Mossoul was given to a resident native; whether Angora had been a full Vice Consulate till 1887; whether, when the Consulates were revived, those of Adrianople and Mogador were suppressed; whether he is aware that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce has protested against the suppression of the Consulate at Mogador; and whether, in view of the political complications likely to ensue from the suppression of the former, and the detriment to trade that may follow the suppression of the latter, he will consider the expediency of reviving these Consulates?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): Mr. Nimrod Rassam, a resident native, has been appointed Consular Agent at Mossoul. The appointment had no connection with the appointment of a Consul at Angora. The post at Angora was a salaried Vice Consulate till 1887, when a Vice Consul was appointed without salary. In 1893 a salaried Consul was appointed. The Consulate at Adrianople was suppressed when the Consulate at Angora was created. The previous organisations in Morocco had no bearing on the arrangement in Turkey. A representation was received from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce about the transfer of the Consulate from Mogador to Dar-el-Baida. The British trade with the latter place is slightly greater, on the average, than that with the former, and the latter was considered to be the better position for the Consulate. Her Majesty's Government have not heard of any political complications likely to ensue from the suppression of the Adrianople Consulate. As regards the Mogador Consulate, the creation of two paid Consulates would lead to an increase of expenditure, which would not be justifiable unless its necessity were proved, but the question of detriment to British trade from the altered system will be watched.

ADMIRALTY CONTRACTS.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that James and George Thomson (Limited), engineers and shipbuilders, Clydebank, near Glasgow, holding an Admiralty contract, had sub-contracted with the Clyde Bridge Steel Works and Mossend Steel Works for the supply of steel plates for the Government contract; whether these firms employ non-Union men, and pay their workmen less than Trades Union rate of wages; and whether, in issuing contracts and sanctioning sub-contracts, the Admiralty had made inquiry, and taken full precautions in accordance with the Resolution of the House of the 13th of February, 1891?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Orders have been placed with the Mossend Works, but not with Clyde Bridge, so far as we know. Both firms are on the Admiralty list of approved steelworkers. The Admiralty have no information on the points raised in the second paragraph of the question. The Resolution of the House is communicated to all Admiralty contractors, and to firms on Admiralty lists for supplies of materials. Both Mossend and Clyde Bridge have been acquainted that the Admiralty expect those entrusted with contracts to adhere to the conditions of the Resolution.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE DINGLE UNION.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many schemes for the construction of labourers' cottages have been sanctioned in the Dingle Union since the passing of the Labourers (Ireland) Acts; whether any of these schemes have been carried out; and whether any of them will be carried out?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that a scheme for the erection of 10 cottages has been sanctioned in the Dingle Union, but that this scheme has not been carried out by the Guardians. The scheme appears to have been abandoned in consequence of the financial state of the Union; and, so far as the Local Government Board are aware, there is no intention of carrying it into effect.

MORTALITY IN INDIAN PRISONS.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the rate of mortality in the Shikapur Prison, in the Bombay Presidency, during the last three years, has exceeded 100 deaths per 1,000, whilst in most of the prisons the rate is below 50 per 1,000; whether he can assign any reason for this high death rate, and will he cause inquiries to be made whether it is in any way attributable to the system of prison discipline in force in India?

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, I should like to ask him if he knows of another instance where the death rate is on so very heavy a scale? Is not 50 per cent. largely in excess of the mortality in English prisons? Is the death rate in Indian prisons not increasing?

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I am informed that the rate of mortality in Shikapur Prison has not during the last three years exceeded 100 per 1,000; but that it has done so on three occasions during the last 15 years, the last of those occasions being in the year 1892. The cause of this high death rate in 1892 was an epidemic of pneumonia, which at the same time quadrupled the death rate among the free population of the town. It is, however, recognised by the Indian authorities that the Shikapur Prison is an unhealthy one. Steps have accordingly been taken, and further steps are contemplated, which will enable them before long to accommodate elsewhere the prisoners who are now confined there.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): Is it not the fact that attempts have been made to improve matters by giving extra warm clothing, in order to guard against this increased mortality? Do not the official Reports show, too, that the death rate in the prisons has been brought down nearly to the average mortality of the ordinary population?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I believe that is so.

MR. HANBURY: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question. Is not the death rate double the rate of mortality in English prisons?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I cannot answer such a question without notice.

OFFENCES UNDER THE MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause to be printed and distributed to Members the Regulations made on the 21st of May, 1892, by the Board of Trade under Section 2 of "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1891," and shortly thereafter presented to Parliament, relating to the prosecution of offences under the Merchandise Marks Act?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): Yes, Sir.

THE ARRAN EVICTIONS.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any of the Sheriff's officers, Constabulary, or other persons engaged in serving notices of eviction upon the Arran islanders, spoke Irish; and whether the contents of those notices were explained by the legal officers to those tenants who speak Irish only?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am afraid I must ask the hon. Gentleman to defer this question till Thursday next. It was only placed on the Paper this morning for the first time, and local inquiry, which will involve some time, is necessary.

THE IRISH LIGHTS BOARD.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the unanimity amongst all sections of Irish Members respecting the immediate necessity of amending the constitution of the Irish Lights Board, he will introduce a Bill this Session upon that subject?

Mr. MUNDELLA: We are in communication with the Irish Lights Board on the subject of the Memorials sent to the Board of Trade, and in due course the question will receive full consideration. I cannot promise to introduce a Government Bill until I see some prospect of its being dealt with by the House. A Bill has already been introduced by a private Member, which, as soon as printed, shall be considered.

Mr. FIELD: Arising out of that reply, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, considering that all sections of the Irish Representatives are united in agreeing as to the necessity of this Bill being passed into law, he will press the Government to pass it?

Mr. MUNDELLA: That is exactly the question I have answered. As soon as we can see a prospect of passing it it shall be done.

IRISH EDUCATION ACT, 1892.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now definitely state the date upon which he will introduce the Bill to remedy the defects in the Irish Education Act of 1892; and, if not, when will he be in a position to make the announcement?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I hope to be able to introduce it on Monday.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION IN WALES.

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): On behalf of the hon. Member for Denbigh, &c., I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he could state how many of the County Schemes framed under the Intermediate Education Act (Wales) have now the validity of law; what is the precise position of those Schemes which were suspended by the action of the House of Lords last year; and whether the Government contemplate any steps to provide for Schemes being more rapidly carried into law?

Mr. ACLAND: Out of 14 Schemes which have been submitted to the Education Department seven have so far become law, and an eighth only awaits Her Majesty's approval at the next Council. These seven schemes include those for the Counties of Cardigan and Merioneth, out of which clauses were struck by the House of Lords last September, and which have become law in their altered form. Two Schemes are now on the Table of both Houses, against which Addresses are to be moved in the House of Lords to-day. The process by which these Schemes become law is certainly tedious, but I do not think any alteration of the Intermediate Education Act can be now contemplated by the Government.

UGANDA.

Mr. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government are in possession of a Report from Captain Macdonald, the officer specially appointed to ascertain from reliable sources the causes of the outbreak of hostilities in Uganda in January, 1892; and whether he will lay this Report upon the Table, or state the reasons why it is not communicated to the House?

*Sir E. GREY: This Report has been received, but, as I stated last week, it cannot be regarded as disposing finally of the questions either of fact or of principle with regard to the only point arising out of this war which is still in dispute—namely, the claim to compensation put forward by the Catholic

Missionaries. Her Majesty's Government are, therefore, not prepared to present the Report to Parliament.

SUSSEX PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORS RETURN.

Mr. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if the column headed "owners" in the Return of Parliamentary Electors lately issued includes resident owners and duplicate entries; if he is aware that in the Horsham, or north-western division of the County of Sussex, there are only 339 non-resident voters on the Register, whereas the number of ownership voters is given in the Return as 1,037; if he has any objection to give a further Return showing the number of ownership electors on the Register in each Parliamentary county or division thereof who neither reside nor carry on business within the division where they are registered, and showing the number of such electors who actually voted in each division at the last election held therein; and if, until such further Return is obtained, he will withdraw a Return which might lead persons to suppose that the 497,247 electors returned as "owners," or a majority of them, are not resident or do not carry on business within the division for which they are so returned?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Return to which the hon. Member alludes includes both resident and non-resident ownership voters. It is not, I think, misleading, for it does not profess to give only the non-resident owners. The hon. Member will find a Return presented to the House in 1883 in which the number of non-resident ownership voters is given for each division. It states the number for West Sussex to be 589. Since then the division has been sub-divided, and I think, therefore, the hon. Member may be accurate in saying that the number of non-resident owners in the Horsham Division is only 339. It would be impossible to obtain a Return from official sources in the form asked for in the third paragraph of the hon. Member's question.

Mr. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: Will the right hon. Gentleman carry the Return of which he speaks up to date?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Return can only be obtained at considerable cost, and I fear, too, that could not be forthcoming within a reasonable time.

THE MATABELE WAR.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether investigation has been made into the occurrence alluded to by Captain C. H. W. Donovan, when he stated at a lecture on the Matabele War at Aldershot on the 20th of March, at which the Duke of Connaught presided, that it was painful to remember that all their gallant comrades, as well as Lobengula himself, might have been saved but for the cowardly, avaricious treachery of a couple of the police; and, if so, by whom the investigation has been made, and with what result?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. S. Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The matter referred to is being investigated. On the 25th of March Sir Henry Loch informed us by telegraph that the report was based on a statement made to Mr. Dawson by natives, that Lobengula had sent two messengers with a box of gold, saying that gold was the only thing that would stop white men; but that Lobengula had not sent any message saying that he would surrender if Major Forbes stopped. Sir H. Loch further stated that the two messengers in question were known, and that one had returned to his kraal, but had been sent for. Two troopers have been arrested on suspicion, and will be tried by the civil power if sufficient evidence is forthcoming against them. But I gather from the Local Authorities that up to the 13th instant evidence was not forthcoming. I presume that Captain Donovan's assumption of the guilt of the men, and the inference he draws from it, are merely founded on the newspaper telegrams of the alleged occurrence. If he has any special knowledge on the subject, it would be an advantage that he should bring it to our notice.

THE MANORHAMILTON VETERINARY INSPECTOR.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. John Darcy, Veterinary Inspector for Manorhamilton Union, has been, or is about to be, dismissed by order of the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council, although he has been 15 years in the service of the Board of Manorhamilton Union, with the sanction of the Privy Council, and has always discharged his dutes in a satisfactory manner; is there any reason for thinking that he is not at present as well able to discharge the duties attaching to his office as ever he was; is he aware that the Board of Guardians unanimously requested the Veterinary Department to retain Mr. Darcy in his office; and does the Veterinary Department now insist on the dismissal of Mr. Darcy on the ground that he does not possess sufficient knowledge of the proper means of distinguishing swine fever from other diseases by *post mortem* appearances; and, if so, what provision does the Department propose to make for a man who has given it 15 years' service?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Board of Guardians have called upon Mr. Darcy, their Inspector under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, to resign his office. This step was taken at the request of the Veterinary Department, it having been reported by two of its professional Inspectors that Mr. Darcy, who is not a veterinary surgeon, does not possess such a knowledge of the contagious diseases of animals as would enable him to sufficiently discharge the duties of the office, and Mr. Darcy admitted his inability to detect swine fever by *post mortem* examination. The question of the efficiency of this Inspector only came under the notice of the Veterinary Department in connection with the work of the Swine Fever Act of 1893, and the Veterinary Department consider it specially important that the Local Authorities should have the services of the most competent officers obtainable to aid in the suppression of the disease. It is the fact that the Guardians passed a unamimous resolution in favour of Mr. Darcy, but they subsequently called for his resignation. These Inspectors are not entitled to either pension or gratuity on ceasing to hold office.

IRISH TEACHERS' GRATUITIES.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a Memorial has been received by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from three children, praying for the gratuity which was lost to them by the untimely death of their father, Stephen Walsh, for 30 years teacher of Glackawn, County Leitrim, National School; is he aware that the teacher, Stephen Walsh, handed in his resignation to his manager, and applied for the usual retiring allowance before his death, and that the National Board refuses his gratuity to his children on the ground that their father died before the District Inspector reported on his application, and that the mother of these three children also died on 6th March last; and will he take steps to have the gratuity, claimed to be due to their father at the time of his death, handed over to the school manager or other person or persons for their benefit?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts appear to be generally as stated in the question. The provisions of the Act of Parliament dealing with applications of this kind require the Commissioners of National Education to certify to the Lord Lieutenant that they are satisfied that a male teacher who would be entitled to a retiring allowance under the Act has become incapable from permanent infirmity of mind or body to discharge his duties, and if such certificate be forthcoming the Lord Lieutenant, with the consent of the Treasury, may grant to such teacher a gratuity. In the present case, the teacher died on the 28th of August, and the application for the gratuity was not received by the Commissioners until the 31st of August, and they had, therefore, no legal power whatever to certify to the application for a gratuity under the provisions of the Act. The Act also provides that if a teacher dies in the service, the premiums paid by him shall be paid to his legal representatives with interest at £3 per cent. per annum. This provision of the Act has, I am informed, been complied with.

FORT VICTORIA.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the investigation instructed by the Marquess of Ripon, in his Despatch, No. 28, of 15th February, 1894, into the occurrences at Fort Victoria, has now been made, by whom, and with what result?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The inquiry will be conducted by Mr. Surmon, Assistant Commissioner of Bechuanaland. As has been already statad more than once, it would have been useless to have begun the investigation until those concerned had mostly returned to Mashonaland. But the time for the investigation to take place seems now to have arrived, and consequently instructions were sent about a fortnight ago to that effect.

LED HORSES.

Mr. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Local Government Board will recommend to all Municipalities and Local Authorities the advisability of discontinuing the practice of several horses in separate carts being chained together head to cart tail, and being led or driven by a single carman, to the injury of the horses, inconvenience to traffic, and danger to pedestrians?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: There is no provision in the existing law under which Local Authorities can prohibit a practice of this kind. Last year the Corporation of Salford in a Private Bill proposed a clause prohibiting the practice. The clause was opposed, on the ground that it would add to the cost of coal. It was rejected by the Select Committee. This year the Corporation of Manchester has made a similar proposal in a Private Bill. If the clause should be adopted by the Committee in the House it may be worthy of consideration whether Municipalities should not be empowered to make a bye-law on the subject.

THE CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Walworth Division of Newington, I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the telegraph clerks of the Foreign Branch of the Central Telegraph Office have sent in a Petition complaining of the unsanitary condition of the room in which they are engaged; whether, in despite of this fact, some of the clerks have been placed on duties necessitating their attendance for 54 hours weekly instead of 48; and whether he can suspend these long duties at least until the unsanitary conditions of the branch have been remedied?

Mr. A. MORLEY: The officers in question did send in a Petition, and the matter is being investigated. Before the receipt of this Petition no complaint had reached me of the condition of this room which, on the contrary, has of late years been materially improved by the substitution of the electric light for gas. Eleven officers out of 250 were called upon to perform 54 hours of duty in one week and 42 in the next, making an average of 48. This was the case in two successive fortnights. Since then the alternation of long and short duties has been daily instead of weekly. The arrangement is necessary to prevent waste of force, and I see no reason for altering it.

BOOK POST.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Walworth Division of Newington, I beg to ask the Postmaster General if the weight of single newspapers passing through the Post Office for ½d. stamp frequently reaches six or eight ounces, as compared with the limit of two ounces for ½d. stamp by book post; and if he is prepared to recommend an increase of the ½d. limit for book post to four ounces?

Mr. A. MORLEY: It is a fact that the weight of single newspapers passing through the post for ½d. frequently exceeds six or eight ounces; the postoge on registered newspapers being fixed by law at ½d. each irrespective of weight; Looking at the loss already incurred on postal packets carried at the halfpenny rate, I am not prepared to recommend that the ½d. limit for book packets should be increased from two to four ounces.

MATABELELAND.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the "Settlement" in regard to Matabeleland will be laid before the House, and an opportunity be given for its discussion before it is finally adopted by Her Majesty's Government?

Mr. S. BUXTON: "The political Settlement" of Matabeleland is now in an advanced state of preparation; but the necessity of communicating with South Africa by post will prevent its presentation before, at earliest, the end of the month. We propose, as soon as the scheme for settlement is finally completed, to circulate it to Parliament in the form of a Blue Book, before the Order in Council based upon it is issued. The Order in Council will, however, be then prepared and submitted to an early Council, in order that the new form of administration may come into operation at the earliest possible date.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there is any copy of the Code of Laws now existing in Matabeleland in the Colonial Office; and whether, in regard to corporal punishments for offences or crimes, any distinction is made between white men and black men?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The laws in force in Matabeleland are the customary native laws, and those in force in the Cape of Good Hope prior to the 10th of June, 1891. There are in the Colonial Office treatises on the Common Law (that is, the Roman Dutch Law) and copies of the Statute Law, in force in the Cape of Good Hope. I cannot pledge myself to say whether or not there is any instance of a distinction in these laws as to cases in which corporal punishment may be inflicted on men of one colour, but not on men of another colour. But my impression is that there is not such a distinction.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Will the hon. Gentleman inquire whether there is such a distinction or not?

Mr. S. BUXTON: I will see that the matter is looked into.

THE FINSBURY ESTATE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the Comptroller whether, as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have allowed the demolition of a large number of houses on their Finsbury estate, which has resulted in unhousing a great many of the working classes, it is the intention of the Commissioners to set aside a portion of the estate for working class dwellings, so that some of these people may be re-housed within a reasonable distance of their employment?

The COMPTROLLER of the HOUSEHOLD (Mr. Leveson-Gower, Stoke-upon-Trent): The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have from time to time devoted considerable portions of their estate in Finsbury to the erection of artisans' dwellings. There has been no important removal of dwellings recently, but the Commissioners have in the years 1891 and 1893 sold rather more than an acre of land to Guinness's Trust at a reduced price for the erection of labourers' dwellings. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are of opinion that they have made provision for the housing of a larger population than that displaced from their estate.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS: Have not fresh buildings been pulled down within the last few months?

Mr. LEVESON-GOWER: I have no information to that effect. If my hon. Friend has more recent information and will give it to me, I will see that steps are taken in the proper quarter to deal with the matter.

THE STREET PREACHING DISTURBANCES AT CORK.

Mr. CARSON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolution recently passed at the Cork Quarterly Meeting of the Methodist Church protesting against the action of the Police Authorities on Sunday, 25th March, in allowing a mob to freely indulge in what the resolution describes as savage and cowardly attacks on the Protestant preachers, and to the allegation in the said resolution that the police supplemented the operations of the mob instead of affording protection to the Protestant preachers; whether he has caused inquiry to be made into the said allegations; and if he has asked the representatives of the Methodist Church at Cork the grounds of such allegations, or given them any opportunity of proving the same?

Mr. J. MORLEY: On the 9th instant my attention was drawn to the resolution in question, which embodies language to the effect quoted by the hon. and learned Member. The resolution, I may observe, appeared to me to be founded on reports which had been published in certain newspapers, and inasmuch as previously to the receipt of the resolution I had been furnished with full and detailed Reports by the police relative to the several allegations preferred by these newspapers, I did not consider it necessary to direct a further investigation into matters which were manifestly founded on these newspaper reports. However, the Police Authorities have now acted on the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member by interrogating representatives of the Methodist Church who were present at the meeting at which the resolution was passed. Six gentlemen in all were interviewed, and the following is the result :—The chairman of the meeting states that no evidence of any kind was adduced in support of the resolution, nor is he aware that any such evidence exists. He also states that, so far as his personal observation of the police in this matter goes, his evidence is in favour of their conduct. The proposer of the resolution says his information was solely founded on hearsay, derived from one of the preachers, his cousin, and that he is not prepared to bring forward evidence in support of his resolution. The proposer's cousin stated that the conduct of the police was rough on the date mentioned, but that he had no charge to make against them individually or collectively, and that the police on all occasions protected the preachers to the best of their power. This gentleman, I may add, violently resisted the police on the occasion in question. The seconder of the resolution admitted that he had no evidence to give or charge to make against the police, individually or collectively. Another gentleman, who was present at the meeting and agreed to the resolution, stated he personally knew nothing about the matter, and that he took for granted that whatever the proposer and seconder of the resolution said was "all right." And, finally, the police questioned a sixth gentleman who took a prominent part in passing the resolution. This gentleman said he had no charge of any kind to make against the police, and that he was not present on the occasion of the alleged police misconduct. I have since heard, however, that the sixth gentleman now withdraws this statement and endorses the terms of the resolution, but it is clear that the withdrawal loses its significance in the face of his first statement that he was not present at all at the proceedings of March 25.

PLATELAYERS AND THEIR DANGERS.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the circumstances connected with the death of Robert Royal, platelayer on the London and South Western Railway, at Vauxhall; and whether he is prepared to compel all Railway Companies to carry out the recommendation of the coroner's jury and appoint look-out men whilst gangs of platelayers are at work?

Mr. MUNDELLA: Yes, Sir; my attention has been directed to the case in question. The Regulations as regards Inspectors, gangers, platelayers, and others employed on the permanent way were carefully considered by the Railway Companies in 1889, and the correspondence on the subject was presented to Parliament. From these Regulations it will be seen that there is always a foreman or leading ganger over each gang employed on the permanent way, who is provided with a copy of the time table, and platelayers are ordered to protect their operations by sending out flagmen. These Regulations are within the discretion of the Railway Companies, and I have no power to modify them.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: Arising out of the question, and failing the adoption of the reasonable suggestions of the coroner's jury, will the right hon. Gentleman authorise his Inspectors to direct attention to the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway between Clapham Junction and Battersea Park, with a view to securing more escape recesses? Will he also have examined some of the six-foot ways, many of which, to my knowledge, are only 3 ft. 9 in. on some of the South London Railways? I have myself, between Clapham Junction and Battersea Park, known the platelayers to straddle a wall in order to get out of the way of the trains.

Mr. MUNDELLA: This is a new suggestion, not arising out of the hon. Member's question, but I shall be happy to consider any facts submitted to me by the hon. Member.

TRAINING COLLEGES FOR SCOTCH TEACHERS.

Captain SINCLAIR (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will be good enough to state what Public Bodies in Scotland have urged upon the Government the necessity of training a larger number of teachers; and for what reasons 80 additional students have been admitted to the Training Colleges in Scotland in 1894?

Sir G. TREVELYAN: Representations have been made by some School Boards, including those of Glasgow and Govan, urging that a larger number of students should be admitted to the Training Colleges. The number of female pupil teachers qualified for training was unusually large, as a result of a change in the date of the examination which closed their apprenticeship, and large numbers would be disappointed if this were not permitted. In order to meet this special and temporary difficulty, the Training College authorities stated that an increased number of students could be admitted without any increase of charge, and the Department accordingly extended the number of admissions, for the present year, by 85.

ST. JAMES'S NATIONAL SCHOOL, HEREFORD.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the St. James's National School, in the City of Hereford (which has for many years been recognised by the Education Department), has been condemned because, being surrounded by public thoroughfares, the managers are unable to increase the playground and make other structural changes; and whether, under the circumstances of the case, he will reconsider the matter?

Mr. ACLAND: This school is reported by the Inspector (who pointed out its numerous and serious defects to the managers as long ago as November, 1892) to be inconveniently and unsuitably planned, with no playground, no cloakrooms, insufficient site for enlargement, and very bad offices. The Department have warned the managers that the Inspector will be unable to recommend any grant beyond the 31st of January, 1895, and have asked them whether they have any proposals to make. I will take care that any proposals the managers make shall be fully considered.

LADY VISITORS TO PRISONS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisons in England and Wales in which women are confined; and in how many of such prisons lady visitors have been appointed?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): There are 54 prisons which receive women, and 29 of these have lady visitors.

RE-ELECTION ON APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE.

Mr. PRIESTLEY (York, W.R., Pudsey): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the desirability of bringing in a Bill to repeal the Act of Parliament which requires a Member of this House, on his appointment to Office under the Crown, to go to his constituents for re-election?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): The Government have no present intention of dealing with this question.

LOCH BROOM.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the Admiralty charts show no islets or rocks in the course of vessels sailing to and from Ullapool; that the sailing directions state that Loch Broom is remarkably free from rocks and islets, whilst the Report of the Treasury Committee of 1891 on railways in the northwest of Scotland states Loch Broom to be encumbered with islets and rocks; and that this Report of the Committee has been assigned as a reason for refusing the grant in aid of the Garve and Ullapool Railway extension scheme; and whether, seeing that the Report of the Treasury Committee is wholly at variance with the Admiralty chart and sailing directions, he will state whether the Treasury Report is correct, or the Admiralty chart and sailing directions?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Hydrographer to the Admiralty informs me that there is no inconsistency in the two statements. Loch Broom is remarkably free from rocks or islets; but the statement in the Report mentioned, that the "approach to Ullapool is encumbered with islets and rocks," is perfectly correct, as, 10 miles outside the entrance to Loch Broom, up which Ullapool lies, and crossing the entrance of the large bay of which Loch Broom is an arm, a large number of islands and rocks are scattered about and encumber the approach from seaward, especially at night and to sailing vessels.

CLONAKILTY LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

Mr. E. BARRY (Cork Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that a demand notice has been received by the Clonakilty Board of Guardians from the Income Tax Department for the sum of £5 8s. 1d. for profits arising out of two rents received from two labourers' cottages, built under the Labourers' (Ireland) Acts, in the Union; whether he is aware that for the past seven years, ending the 29th of September, 1893, a net loss of £1,840 has been sustained by the Board of Guardians on the cottages erected within the Union, and that an annual loss of £300 is at present sustained by the Guardians, being the difference between the rents received and the amount payable to the Board of Works; and whether, under the circumstances, he will have this tax remitted on all those cottages?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Boards of Guardians are not exempt from Income Tax (Schedule A) in respect of cottage property owned by them. It is reported to me that the assessment referred to in the question is on 120 (not two) houses, &c., described in the Valuation Lists as the property of the Clonakilty Board of Guardians. The Poor Law Valuation on this property is, in the aggregate, £191 15s., the duty on which is £5 8s. 1d. A certain adjustment seems likely to be necessary in respect to the interest paid to the Board of Works, and, if the rents received are less than the valuations, this will have to be allowed for. These matters can be arranged with the local Surveyor of Taxes (Cork).

Mr. SEXTON: As the Guardians pay to the Treasury every year more than they receive as rent for the cottages, there is manifestly a loss, and there ought consequently to be no assessment. Will the right hon. Gentleman not communicate with the Income Tax authorities, so that no claim should be made on the Guardians in this matter?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will inquire into the matter. I have no knowledge of it personally.

SURRENDERS TO THE TREASURY.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will lay upon the Table of the House a full copy of the Paper from which he read, on the 12th April, descriptive of the procedure of dealing with surrenders from the Spending Departments to the Treasury?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The notice from which I read was an informal one, and not in a shape which can be presented to Parliament, but I have directed a regular Minute to be presented, and that I will lay on the Table.

EQUALISATION OF RATES (LONDON) BILL.

Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will postpone the Second Reading of the Equalisation of Rates (London) Bill until the Return moved for by the President of the Local Government Board on the 16th April has been presented to the House?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not think we ought to delay this Bill, and we must take any favourable opportunity of pressing it on.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Return will be in the hands of Members on Thursday.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I hope that, as the Bill excites great interest both in the east and west of London, it will be taken at a convenient hour and not late in the evening. We ought to have full notice as to when a Bill of this magnitude will be taken.

Sir J. LUBBOCK: As the Return will only be in our hands on Thursday, I think Members ought to have an opportunity of considering the Report.

Sir W. HARCOURT: A proper opportunity will be given for discussing a Bill of such importance.

Sir J. LUBBOCK: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question whether the Bill will not be taken this week. He can hardly expect us to be prepared to discuss it this week if we only get the Return on Thursday. Will the right hon. Gentleman say the Bill will not be taken this week?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I can give no undertaking to that effect.

ACHILL SOUND RAILWAY.

Dr. R. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state when the railway between Newport and Achill Sound will be opened for traffic; is he aware that owing to the position of the site on which it is proposed to build the Mulrany station the approach road is rendered almost impassable to vehicular traffic in consequence of its zig-zag construction; and will he see that the station is erected on a more suitable site so that it may be possible to drive to or from it with safety?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: (1.) I understand that the section from Newport to Mulrany will be opened in the coming July; and that from Mulrany to Achill will probably not be completed before August. (2.) The approach road to Mulrany Station not having yet been definitely located, the suggestion that it is impracticable is premature. (3.) The station is already in course of construction, and the hon. Member may be assured that suitable access to it will be provided.

CANAL RATES.

Sir J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the great commercial importance of canals as competitors with railways, and having regard to the information obtained by means of the recent Board of Trade inquiry respecting the revision of Canal Companies' tolls and charges, he can state whether he is prepared to take steps, and, if so, in what form, to free the canals now owned by Railway Companies, so as to make them, as formerly, independent competitive means of transport?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I do not understand what steps the hon. Baronet contemplates. If he suggests that the Government should purchase the canals owned by Railway Companies I am not able to hold out any hopes in that direction. We are, however, fixing maximum tolls for canals, whether owned by Railway Companies or not, which we hope will lead to an expansion of canal traffic.

Sir J. WHITEHEAD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the demand for the Reports of the Proceedings before the Joint Select Committees of 1891-92 and 1893 on the Railway and Canal Rates and Charges Provisional Order Confirmation Bills and the present importance of those proceedings to the commercial community, he will give instructions for the preparation of a full analytical index to them, similar to that published in regard to the hearing of objections to the Railway Companies' proposed Schedules before the Board of Trade in 1889-90?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The Report of the hearing of objections before the Board of Trade in 1889-90 was a Departmental Paper, and an index was prepared by the Board of Trade. The Reports of the Select Committee of 1892-93 are Parliamentary Papers, and the preparation of an index thereto is a matter for the House. As a matter of fact, however, an index was published with the Reports, and no complaint of its inadequacy has been received.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS AS POSTMEN.

Sir J. WHITEHEAD: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the system of chiefly appointing discharged soldiers as letter carriers has been satisfactory; and, if not, whether he will any longer largely exclude civilians from employment in that service?

Mr. A. MORLEY: The system under which postmen's appointments are preferentially given to discharged soldiers and sailors has now been in operation for about three years, and has, on the whole, worked fairly well. I may state, however, that the system has since its introduction been modified to the extent of providing for telegraph messengers and other persons who have claims on the Department.

THE INCREASED WHISKY DUTY.

Mr. SEXTON: I rise to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question with a view to obtaining a clearer understanding than some of us at present have with regard to the Budget proposals. It is whether, having regard to the increasing yield of the adjusted Death Duties in future years, it is intended at present that the increased tax on spirits should be enacted for more than the present financial year?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think I ought to have notice of the question. I could not answer it offhand.

MR. SEXTON: I shall put the question again on Thursday.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): Would the right hon. Gentleman have any objection to lay on the Table of the House a Return showing the amount he expects to receive from Ireland and Scotland in respect of the increased tax on spirits? And will he also promise to take care that the accounts will be so kept that we shall know at the end of the year what each country has contributed?

[No answer was given.]

THE TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House whether he is aware that Notice of the Motion standing in his name upon the Paper for the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule to-night was only given at half-past 2 o'clock, when almost everybody had gone to bed, and long after the Whips had been issued? I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether that is not a rather inconvenient custom? I also wish to ask him whether, supposing the discussion on the proposed Scotch Committee is not concluded to-night, he intends to ask the House to sit late next week?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am sorry that the Sitting was so late last night; but the Government certainly did not anticipate it, and that was the reason why the notice was given at such an hour. The usual practice is to give it at the Adjournment of the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: You should let the Opposition know.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am sorry that earlier notice was not given, and I will take care that it shall be given in proper time in future. I think it ought to be done. I hope that we shall be able to conclude the discussion at a reasonable hour to-night.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not quite certain that I understand the purport of the right hon. Gentleman's reply. Is he not aware that with regard to the Amendment now before the House that no Cabinet Minister has as yet spoken, and that several important speakers among those who usually act with me have yet to give their opinions upon it? I have every hope and expectation that the Amendment standing in my name will be decided to-night, but with regard to later proposals of great importance I am not so certain.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I propose to place a Cabinet Minister at the disposal of the right hon. Gentleman at an early hour of the Debate. I hope that we may be able to finally dispose of this Motion to-night.

PRIVILEGE.

*MR. PRITCHARD-MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvl): I desire to bring under the notice of Mr. Speaker and of the House certain facts and incidents which have lately transpired with regard to the conduct of business in this House. Before referring to the particular incidents, perhaps it will be necessary for me to say, for the benefit of those lay hon. Members who may not have studied the matter, that an Act of Parliament passed at the time of Elizabeth has been found to be exceedingly oppressive, and that Lord Macnaghten introduced in the House of Lords last year a Bill for the purpose of repealing that Act. The House will perhaps better appreciate the point if I use Lord Macnaghten's words instead of my own. Lord Macnaghten said upon that occasion—

> "The law would hold that a vendor had done nothing wrong in collusion with the author of a voluntary conveyance to defeat this solemn instrument. It was, perhaps, a startling proposition that one man might honestly sell what was not his, and retain the price, and that another, knowing all the circumstances, might honestly help him to rob the owner, a proposition one would think puzzling to a lay mind, and to a legal mind not wholly satisfactory."

That Act of Queen Elizabeth was passed, as all the Judges have admitted, for the express purpose of preventing frauds, which were perpetrated somewhat in this fashion: A man of mature age might settle his lands upon his wife and children, and subsequently he would sell his land, and after his death his family would claim the lands under the prior settlement, and the Act of Elizabeth was intended for the sole purpose of preventing frauds of this character. But in the light of day, and with the Judge-made law which we have with regard to this Statute, the effect has been the reverse, and conveyances which have been made *bonâ fide* "for love and affection" have been set aside by persons who have had full knowledge of the whole of the facts and connived at this fraud. The Bill passed in all its stages in the House of Lords and was sent to this House, and I understand that Lord Macnaghten requested the hon. and learned Member for North Norfolk to take charge of it. It passed through all its stages in this House up to the Third Reading. I wish the House to note that fact. The Third Reading was fixed for May 31 of last year; and when the hon. and learned Member moved it, the hon. Member for the Louth Division got up in his place and blocked the Bill. The block was subsequently withdrawn. The particular incident to which I desire to draw attention occurred at this moment. In order that the House may be in a position to grasp the matter, I must now refer to a settlement made in 1885. Mrs. Ingram, a widow lady, settled upon her children, with remainder to her grandchildren, some property in Lincolnshire, which cost £60,000, and is now of the value of £30,000. The property was conveyed by an ordinary deed of conveyance to trustees under the settlement, and they were empowered to sell it and hand the proceeds over to the children. The trustees under the settlement received the rents and profits on behalf of the children, and heard nothing whatever respecting the matter until February 17 last, when a firm of solicitors (Messrs. Asburst, Morris, and Crispe), carrying on business in the City of London, gave notice that they had been instructed by Sir Edward Watkin to inform them that on May 30, 1893, Mrs. Ingram had conveyed all these properties to Sir Edward Watkin for valuable consideration. I should mention that a marriage took place between the lady to whom I have referred and the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe. She, being 80 years of age, married the hon. Baronet on April 1, 1892. There was a marriage settlement, and it is essential that I should refer to it for the purpose of showing the House that at the time it was made there was no desire or attempt on the part of the parties to the marriage contract to interfere with this settlement. There is a clause in it which transfers certain properties to Sir Edward Watkin,

> "Except any properties included in any still subsisting settlement heretofore made by the said Anne Ingram."

So that up to two years ago the settlement was regarded by everybody as legal and binding. On May 31 the block of the Bill took place. The hon. and learned Member for Louth states that it took place at the instance of Mr. John Morris, who wrote to him and asked him to block the Bill. The Bill was blocked on the 31st of May, the date of the conveyance from Lady Watkin to her husband was May 30th, and the deed was ostensibly executed on that date. But instructions came to block it on the 31st of May, and it was so blocked. Subsequently, the hon. Member for Louth wrote to Mr. John Morris, and said—

> "I have had an opportunity of looking into this Bill. I see no objection to it, and I desire to know why I am requested to block it."

He received a reply from Mr. Morris, who at the time was staying with the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe, and Lady Watkin, at Snowdon, stating that there was no further necessity to block the Bill, which by the grace of Mr. Morris was allowed to become the law of the land. I regret to say that I have not been able to get a copy of the initial correspondence which took place between these gentlemen. I am not entitled to it perhaps. I should mention that when the Bill was blocked the hon. Baronet the Member for Boston (Sir W. Ingram) asked the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Mr. Cozens-Hardy) who it was who blocked the Bill. The hon. Baronet did not know the hon. Member for North Norfolk nor the hon. Member for Louth. The hon. Member for North Norfolk replied that the Bill had been blocked by the hon. Member for Louth, who said he did not know why he had blocked the Bill. When last month the hon. Baronet the Member for Boston told the hon. Member for Louth the effect which his blocking of the Bill had had, the hon. Member for Louth denied all knowledge of the conveyance, and some correspondence took place between the hon. Member for Louth and Mr. Morris, which it is absolutely necessary I should read to the House. The letter ran—

"House of Commons Library,
12th March, 1894.

"My Dear Mr. Morris,—Sir William Ingram has been to me to-day and complained that in the interval between my blocking that Conveyancing Bill of Cozens-Hardy and the removal of my block some deed was signed by Lady Watkin depriving Sir W. Ingram and his brothers of certain property. I told him that I was not aware of any such thing, and that I certainly would not have blocked any Bill to serve any personal ends of anybody had I been aware of it. I feel that I should write and ask you what is the explanation of this."—Yours faithfully, "(Signed) R. W. Perks.

"John Morris, Esq."

A reply came from Mr. Morris as follows:—

"R. W. Perks, Esq., M.P.
15th March, 1894.

"Dear Perks,—In reply to your note you are entitled to an explanation, and after I have given it you may show it, if you like, to Mr. Cozens-Hardy, and if either of you say what I did was open to objection I shall be surprised.

"Some years ago Lady Watkin made voluntary settlements of estates in Lincolnshire on her sons. As the law stood before the Act in question was passed these settlements could be defeated by Lady Watkin conveying the estates to a purchaser for value.

"In the course of negotiations for a general settlement of all differences between Lady Watkin and her sons I drew the attention of the sons' solicitors to the subject of these settlements, and suggested that as part of the then proposed compromise they should be confirmed and made absolute, and terms were provisionally arranged between myself and the sons' solicitor for this being done, when one day he told me that Sir William Ingram did not care about its being included in the compromise, as he considered the estates of no value in consequence of the agricultural depression, and that, therefore, there was no risk of Lady Watkin's making a sale, as nobody would give anything for them.

"A short time after this I happened by the merest chance to see that a Public Bill had been introduced by a private Member into Parliament for abolishing the Act of Elizabeth relating to the subject, and at the time I applied to you it was being hurried through the Commons, and I have since learned that Mr. Cozens-Hardy, who had charge of the Bill, was Sir William Ingram's counsel, and had been advising him on the matter.

"Even if the Bill had been brought in by Government on public grounds I consider I should have been strictly within my right to take the steps I did to get a little time to consider it; a Bill altering the law on the subject of voluntary conveyances which had been in operation for 300 years.

"I am not aware that any different rule is applicable to a Bill promoted by a private Member and so framed as to give it an *ex post facto* operation, thereby depriving Lady Watkin of her legal right as to these estates.

"I prefer putting it to you broadly as a question of principle, that the few days' further time obtained by your block was really a personal convenience to myself, as I wanted to confer with Lady Watkin on the subject before she executed the conveyance, which was prepared and ready for execution before I applied to you. Lady Watkin was in Wales at the time, and I was unwell, and it was a convenience to me to go down a few days later than I did in consequence of my being unwell.

"I will only add that you knew nothing of any of these circumstances. You simply complied with my request as an act of courtesy to me, a favour which I should not have hesitated to ask of any Member.

"Sorry to trouble you with so long a story, but I could not put it to you shorter.

"Yours truly,
"(Signed) J. Morris."

I have little more to say on this matter. What I desire to emphasise is that Mr. J. Morris, who is a solicitor, tampered with a Member of this House; that he induced a Member of this House to block a Bill which was being passed through this House for the general benefit of the community, in order to gain a particular object for a personal purpose, and for a private individual. I submit that there is evidence that the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe instructed his solicitor so to act. Solicitors do not act without instructions, either general or special. If he did instruct Mr. Morris, then I submit that the hon. Baronet was guilty of a breach of the Privileges of this House, or, at any rate, of conduct of which this House will take cognisance. If the solicitor, Mr. Morris, had no instructions whatever, then he, I submit, is guilty of a gross breach of the Privileges of this House. I submit, further, that the House should know that the hon. Member for Louth, who is a solicitor, and the friend of another solicitor in the City practising in the next street, has acted for the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe, although, in this instance, Mr. Morris only acted. I find in "Mems. about Members" in *The Pall Mall Gazette* this entry. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Then I will not read it. I assert that I understand that the hon. Member for Louth is solicitor to the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe in regard to the Metropolitan Railway, the Channel Tunnel, the Watkin Tower, and "other schemes and projects of that great man." I submit that an hon. Member has been tampered with, and I ask you, Sir, whether, under these circumstances, I should move that a Committee be appointed to consider this matter, because, having regard to the complicated nature of it, it would be better, perhaps, that a Committee should inquire into the subject rather than that the time of the House should be taken up?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has not said what he wants the Select Committee to inquire into. Will the hon. Gentleman read the Reference to the Committee which he wishes the House to appoint?

Mr. PRITCHARD-MORGAN: I move, Sir—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to Inquire and Report to this House whether any, and, if so, what, persons have been guilty of a breach of the Privileges of this House in reference to the blocking of the Voluntary Conveyances Bill on 31st of May, 1893, and that any two or more Members of such Committee have power to examine any witnesses who are incapacitated by sickness from attending personally to be examined by such Committee."

Sir W. INGRAM (Boston) seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to Inquire and Report to this House whether any, and, if so, what, persons have been guilty of a breach of the Privileges of this House in reference to the blocking of the Voluntary Conveyances Bill on 31st of May, 1893, and that any two or more Members of such Committee have power to examine any witnesses who are incapacitated by sickness from attending personally to be examined by such Committee."—(*Mr. Pritchard-Morgan.*)

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think the opinion of this House is that we should not extend breaches of Privilege, and I am bound to say that the Motion which my hon. Friend has made has gone infinitely beyond any idea of questions of Privilege ever contemplated. I have listened to the statement of the hon. Member, and it appears to me to amount to this—that there has been some domestic difference in certain families in reference to a settlement. What have we got to do with that? As regards my hon. Friend the Member for Louth, nobody imputes to him that he knew anything of this. That was stated by all the parties. It appears, as I gather, that a solicitor acting for a gentleman who was unwell wanted time to consider a Bill; and he asked my hon. Friend to block it, in order that there might be some further time taken for its discussion. Well, Sir, the practice of blocking Bills is a common practice, and if we were to appoint a Committee to inquire into the reasons for blocking Bills we should have enough to do. I have observed that a Bill in which I take great interest has frequently been blocked, and if we were to inquire into the objects of the people who block it it would be a very inconvenient inquiry. Therefore, I do hope that the House, without further discussion, will decline to entertain this Motion.

*Mr. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth): I would ask the House just for one moment to give me the opportunity of offering to it a personal explanation. In the first place, permit me to say that I am entirely ignorant of the personal controversies which have unfortunately arisen between the hon. Member for Boston and his relatives, and I have no interest in them directly or indirectly. So far as I am concerned, the facts are as follows: The Voluntary Conveyances Act was set down for Committee, not for Third Reading, as stated by the hon. Member, on Wednesday, the 31st of May. The Bill was a Public Bill in charge of a private Member, the hon. and learned Member for the Northern Division of Norfolk. On Monday, the 29th of May, I received a letter from Mr. John Morris (of the firm of Ashurst, Morris and Co.), a gentleman well-known to every legal Member of this House, asking me if I would on his behalf, and that of the hon. Member for Hythe, oppose the Voluntary Conveyances Bill. Mr. Morris did not tell me, nor was I aware, why he objected to the Bill; and I had no opportunity of seeing him before the Bill came into Committee on Wednesday. Not knowing what the objections to the Bill were, I obtained a copy of the Bill, and found that it made very important changes in the law relating to voluntary conveyances. I also ascertained that the Bill had been read a second time in this House on the 17th of May without any comment or explanation. When the Bill came on as an unopposed Bill on Wednesday, the 31st of May, and was moved without comment by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Norfolk, I objected, and the Bill consequently stood over. My hon. and learned Friend in charge of the Bill came to me and asked me why I objected to it; and I told him that Mr. John Morris had asked me to oppose the Bill; that I did not then know Mr. Morris's reasons as I had not seen him, but that I had read the Bill, which seemed to me too important a Bill to pass without consideration and explanation. My hon. and learned Friend asked me to go with him into the Library and read the Report of the Debate in the Lords upon the Bill. I did so, and I wrote to Mr. Morris, saying that the Bill seemed to me to be a reasonable one, and that I should be glad to know what his objections to it were, and I informed the hon. Member in charge of the Bill that I would not take further action. The Bill was set down for Committee on the following Wednesday, the 7th of June. I did not oppose it, nor did I take any further action in the matter. The Bill, having been amended in Committee, had to pass the Third Reading and to be sent back to the House of Lords, and it received the Royal Assent on the 29th of June, exactly a month after the day in which it is said I blocked it in the interest of the parties. I heard nothing more of the subject. I had no conversation either with Mr. Morris or the hon. Baronet the Member for Hythe on the matter. I had not the slightest idea why they objected to the Bill; I knew nothing of their family disputes, and the circumstance passed completely out of my mind until a month ago, when an hon. Member came to me in the Lobby and told me substantially what the hon. Member for Merthyr has just stated to the House. I wrote Mr. Morris, asking him for an explanation, and I received the reply which has been read to the House, which fully, and, to my mind, perfectly satisfactorily, dealt with all the circumstances. I have already stated to the House that when I opposed the Voluntary Conveyances Bill I had no knowledge whatever of any of the circumstances referred to by the hon. Member for Merthyr, nor did I know what Mr. Morris's objections were. I have only to add, while thanking the House for their indulgence in permitting me to make this statement, that I was not in May, 1893, nor am I now, nor have I at any time been directly or indirectly, professionally or otherwise, interested to the extent of one single farthing in any of these disputes, nor do I professionally represent any of the parties. It is true that in years gone by I had the honour of acting for many of the Railway Companies that were under the guidance of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hythe, but I am not his private professional adviser, nor have I, as I say, a farthing of interest in any of the matters which are the subject of this unhappy family controversy.

*Sir R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I would not have spoken had I not received a communication from Mr. Morris, who is known to many as a member of the firm of Ashurst and Morris—a firm of the highest position in the City of London, in practice 40 or 50 years. I could not help being somewhat surprised, and I was at a loss for the reason that could have induced the hon. Member (Mr. Pritchard-Morgan) to bring forward this question until I saw that his Motion was seconded by the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Ingram), who seems to be personally connected with this matter. I cannot help thinking it unfortunate that such a statement should have been made in the absence of the hon. Baronet (Sir E. Watkin), who is too ill even to have the matter communicated to him. The suggestion is that the hon. Baronet (Sir E. Watkin) committed an improper act in securing the blocking of this Bill. It appears to me that if such an accusation was going to be made, it should have been made when the hon. Baronet could have been present, or when communication could have been made to him, in order that his views might have been presented to the House.

Mr. PRITCHARD-MORGAN: I communicated with the hon. Baronet (Sir E. Watkin) last week, when he was in London. He travelled from London to Manchester, and thence to Snowdon. I am not responsible for the fact of the letter not having reached him. His secretary now tells me that the hon. Baronet is too ill to receive letters. I did what I could to communicate with him.

Sir R. WEBSTER: I mentioned this merely to show the exact position in which the matter stands. With regard to Mr. Morris, the explanation that has been read is, I submit, a complete refutation of any suggestion that Mr. Morris had been guilty of any breach of Privilege. From Mr. Morris's statement it is clear that this matter had been in preparation for a considerable time, that the conveyance was actually executed on May 30, that the block on the Bill did not take place until the 31st, that that was only the Committee stage, and that the Bill did not receive the Royal Assent until a month afterwards. The House will see how absolutely groundless is the suggestion that Mr. Morris, whatever he may have done, was in any way guilty of a breach of Privilege. In communicating with the hon. Member (Mr. Perks) I venture to think, if I may concur with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that if the motives with which Bills have been and are blocked were to be examined into, the House would have an endless and a somewhat perplexing task. The explanation shows that there was no necessity for occupying the time of the House, or for bringing before Members the name of the solicitor, who, as far as I know, enjoys the respect of those with whom he is acquainted, who has done nothing of which he is ashamed, or of which he is not prepared to give the fullest explanation.

SIR W. INGRAM (Boston): I wish, as far as possible, to eliminate from the few remarks I shall make all comments of a personal nature. With regard to the matter involved in the question, I feel sure that it is not one for the House to decide. That is of a private nature, and will be referred to the proper Court for decision. I do hope, however, that hon. Members will allow me to explain, and to assure them on my word, as a Member of this House, that I had nothing to do with the introduction of this Bill into the House of Lords. It was introduced by Lord Macnaghten, without my knowledge and without any communication from anybody connected with me. It was looked after in this House by the hon. Member (Mr. Cozens-Hardy) not in my interests and not at my instigation, as he can assure you. We ought, I think, to be gratified with the explanation of the hon. Member (Mr. Perks). I feel certain that he was not personally, directly or indirectly, interested in this matter. At the same time, I think it right to say that, taking the correspondence as it has been read, there is not the least doubt that the block on this Bill enabled the hon. Baronet (Sir E. Watkin) to obtain this property. It is as clear as possible that the property was purchased on May 31. This, however, does not concern Members of the House, and I shall be very glad if these personal matters can be removed from the notice of the House.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. PRITCHARD-MORGAN: I beg to give notice that on an early day I will move to make valid the voluntary settlement.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Motion for the appointment of a Standing Committee on Scotch Bills, if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order Sittings of the House.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resumed Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [2nd April],

> "That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee:
>
> That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged:
>
> That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

And which Amendment was to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

> "This House declines to sanction, in regard to Bills relating to one portion only of the United Kingdom, any plan by which the ancient practice as to the constitution of Committees of this House shall be fundamentally altered until it has had an opportunity of pronouncing upon a general scheme which shall extend a like treatment to Bills relating to each of the other portions of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question again proposed,

> "That the words 'in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47' stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): Sir, the Government claim to be a Progressive Party, but the Unionists are the true Party of Progress: the Government represent retrogression; they wish to revive the boundaries and differences which separated us formerly. They are promoting, unintentionally of course, jealousies which weakened us so much in the past, which retarded the progress of this country, and led to so many civil wars, so much bloodshed and misery. As between England and Scotland, the boundary line is an old strategical line, but represents no difference of race, habits, or interests. The whole condition of the southern agricultural counties of Scotland resemble much more closely the agricultural districts of Northern England than the Urban or Highland districts of Scotland. Ethnologically, the line of separation between England and Scotland is quite imaginary. There is no real distinction between the population North and South of the line. The real distinction is between the Highlanders and the Lowlanders. The true boundary line is not from East to West, but from North to South, or, speaking more exactly, from North-East to South-West. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian strongly condemned the proposal now made by Her Majesty's Government. Speaking in 1882, in reply to Mr. Parnell in opposition to a proposal for geographical Grand Committees, he said—

> "The hon. Member invited the Government to sanction the principle that certain Imperial powers—the powers of the Imperial Parliament—should be exercised by bodies of Members taken exclusively from one part of the United Kingdom. He greatly doubted whether the Parliament would ever sanction anything of the kind. . . . . For that House to divide itself in the manner proposed would be a most singular and extraordinary innovation, and an innovation which the House would not, he thought, under any circumstances, be prepared to entertain."

Devolution may or may not be necessary, but if necessary it should be determined by subjects, not by geographical boundaries. From the Amendment I had on the Paper—and which the Forms of the House prevent my moving—it has been said that I am prepared to go even further than Her Majesty's Government. That is not so; I am not in favour of geographical Grand Committees; but I maintain that if Scotch Bills are to be referred to a Scotch Committee, English Bills should be referred to an English Committee, and that if Irish Members wish it a similar course should be adopted in that case also. Grand Committees for the several sections of the United Kingdom are a mistake, but if there is to be one for Scotland I hold that it is obviously right and just that we should have a Grand Committee for England also, and the obligation of proof rests with those who oppose. It may be said that England has expressed no desire for such a course. I might reply, neither has Scotland. Some Scotch Members wisely wish to preserve the Union under which the country has flourished so greatly: others unwisely ask for a separate Legislature; but those who are in favour of a Scotch Grand Committee, unless as a mere stepping stone to separation, are a small minority. I will not, however, dwell upon this point, which is not material to my argument. But though England has shown no desire for separate Grand Committees, still, if Scotland is to have one, we ought to be placed in the same position. I may refer on this point to the Manifesto of the Scotch Home Rule Association, who say—

> "The idea does not find favour in Scotland, for the same reason as rendered the corresponding one for Ireland unacceptable to the Irish people, and because, in addition, the system of legislation in National Grand Committees could only have been entertained if applied to English and Irish as well as to Scottish Legislatures."

And they continue—

> "This question affects the vital interests of each of the three parties to the present Union. If one of them is to be entrusted with the sole management of domestic affairs, the other two must receive the same privilege. No consideration for Ireland would justify your Memorialists in submitting to an arrangement under which her Representatives, being allowed the exclusive management of their own domestic affairs, would be permitted also to control in the Imperial Parliament the domestic affairs of Scotland."

That seems to me to be a very sensible and logical argument. Indeed, if only one such Grand Committee is to be constituted, I should claim the precedence for England. Well, Sir, what was the argument used by the Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith) the other day at Huddersfield. I always read with very great interest and attention everything that falls from him, because he speaks with great ability and moderation, and always makes out the best case he can from his own point of view, and also because he is one of the most influential of those whom I have the honour of representing in this House. The right hon. Gentleman told us that a Scotch Bill was "beyond the powers of an Englishman to comprehend." That was not very complimentary; and, if correct, it suggests that in the opinion of the Government it would be an improvement if English Bills also—not to say Irish—were referred to a Scotch Committee rather than subjected to the stupid criticism of English Members. Then, he continued—

> "How disappointing when we have had a nice instructive, quiet, fruitful Debate, in which the whole matter has been gone into from a purely Scotch point of view to have these English strangers overrule our opinions!"

Things have come to a pretty pass when an English Home Secretary speaks of English Members in our own House of Commons as strangers! It shows how the Government are themselves affected by the Separatist and anti-national feelings which they are rousing all over the country. If, Sir, we turn to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan), what reason does he allege for this proposal? He gives three. He says—

> "Have we been told the country is too small and unimportant—a country with a population as large as a second-class European Kingdom—a Kingdom with manners, customs, laws, and administration of its own? Have we been shown that the population to whom those powers are asked to be entrusted cannot be trusted with them? . . . Have we been shown that Scotchmen do not understand or are unfitted to manage their own education, their own Universities, their own municipal affairs, their own liquor traffic, and all the other matters which concern the morality, the welfare, and the prosperity of the country? Let our opponents show that, or let them admit that we have a good case."

Now, surely he cannot deny that these reasons apply with as much force, or even more force, to England. He says that

> "Scotland has manners, customs, laws, and an administration of its own."

So has England. He says—

> "Cannot the Scotch, to whom the powers are asked to be entrusted, be entrusted with them?"

Sir J. Lubbock

So I ask, with all submission to the Home Secretary, whether we English are not equally fitted for such powers? He asks—

> "Has it been shown that Scotchmen are unfitted to manage their own education, their own municipal affairs, and other matters which concern the welfare of the country?"

Well, does he deny that the English are competent also? Lastly, he says that "Scotland is not small and unimportant." Well, I will not ask him to admit that England is more important, but he will not deny that she is larger. And when he says, in conclusion—

> "Let our opponents show that, or let them admit that we have a good case,"

Englishmen may say the same with even greater force. I will not do Scotch Members the injustice of supposing that they would refuse to us the advantage they claim for themselves. If Scotland is to have a special Grand Committee, why not England and Ireland also? Mr. Parnell was of the same opinion. In a Draft Report presented to a Committee of the House in 1868 he proposed—

> "That whenever any Public Bill relating exclusively to the affairs of either England, Ireland, or Scotland has been read a second time it shall be referred, unless otherwise directed by the House, to a Committee consisting of the Members representing countries and places in England, or of the Members representing Ireland or Scotland respectively, if the Bill referred to Ireland or Scotland."

Who, then, is there who objects to this proposal? Lord Rosebery, in his celebrated speech in another place, which seemed quite clear till it was explained, spoke of England as the predominant partner. The Government are doing their best, however, to reduce us to a position of degrading inferiority. They would give Ireland Home Rule, and Scotland a Grand Committee for Scotch affairs, and then allow Scotch and Irish Members to come and vote on English affairs. In fact, we have as yet heard one reason, and one reason only, why a Grand Committee is to be given to Scotland and withheld from England—namely, that Government do not possess the confidence of the people of England, and could not carry their measures. But, Sir, why are the wishes of the Government to prevail against the wishes of the people of England? Why are we to be overridden by Scotch and Irish votes? As long as we are all treated alike we cannot complain. Of course, the Union has some drawbacks for all of us; more than compensated, however, by the advantages. But if a change is made, it is monstrous and unpatriotic that Scotch Members are not only to legislate for themselves, but to override the wishes of England on English affairs. The reason given by supporters of Government against the proposal is really the strongest reason for it. May I say one word with reference to the prospects of the Liberal Party if they have a Grand Committee composed of English Members? At present they had the support of the Irish Members, but nobody can expect that to continue. No one who has watched the course of the Roman Catholic Church can consider that in the future her weight is likely in all cases to be thrown into the Liberal scale, and, therefore, I think it will be a very short-sighted policy to exclude England from having a Grand Committee of its own by any consideration of that kind. Finally, I would ask Scotch and Irish Members to place themselves in our position. They would, I am sure, find no words strong enough to denounce a policy which proposed to give English Members the right to manage their own affairs without interference, and then to vote on Scotch and Irish affairs. I appeal, then, to them to look at this question in a spirit of justice and equity; and if English Members would also approach the question in a spirit not of Party but of patriotism, as statesmen and not as politicians, and with a sense of what we owe to our country, I should have no doubt as to the vote they would give.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, the right hon. Gentleman had told the House that there was no more difference between Scotland and England than there was between Devonshire and the rest of England.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK said, he had not said anything of the kind. What he had said was, that there was a greater difference between the South of Scotland and the Highlands than between the South of Scotland and the North of England.

Mr. HUNTER said, the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to be aware of the fact that the whole legal system of Scotland was different from that of England; that Scotland had her own Courts and her own judicature, which were preserved to her by the Treaty of Union, of which the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to have heard, and that her ecclesiastical organisation was totally different from that of England. In England one ecclesiastic was paid £15,000 a year, while another got £50 or £100 a year, and there were grades and ranks, and dignities, amongst the ministers of religion. Of all these things they knew nothing in Scotland. The Scotch ecclesiastical system was based upon a principle of equality. Scotchmen had always exhibited in their institutions a passion for equality. Nobody who knew anything of the history of England would say the same of Englishmen. With regard to education, what could be more different than the ideas of Scotchmen and Englishman? An Englishman's idea of education seemed to be to make the religion of the teachers high and their salaries low. The Scotch Poor Law administration was totally different from that of England, and so was the municipal government. The smallest town in Scotland had its own supply of gas and water. Scotchmen did not object to Englishmen allowing themselves to be robbed by Gas Companies and Water Companies, because that was their own affair, but they could not allow it to be said that there was no difference between Scotland and England. There was a profound difference, not only in the institutions but in the education and the ideals and the intellect of the people. It had been said by a gentleman sitting opposite that the appointment of such a Committee as was proposed by the Government would be a grave Constitutional change. That was very high-sounding, sonorous, awe-inspiring language, but what did it mean as applied to the proposal of the Government? He never heard the word "Constitutional" but he was reminded of the observation of Hobbs, "That words were the counters of wise men and the money of fools." What was the Constitution? That was a question which was much more easy to ask than to answer. One of the most able critics of the British Constitution, De Tocqueville, who also entertained a prodigious admiration for Englishmen and English institutions, said, in answer to that question—

> "There is no such thing as the British Constitution. It is a thing which has no existence."

He believed that if Professor Dicey were put into one room, and three or four equally competent men into other rooms, and they were all asked to write an account of the British Constitution without holding any communication with one another, no two of them would agree in all particulars, but not one of them would dream of suggesting that the Rules of Procedure of the House of Commons were part of the Constitution. In some countries a Constitution undoubtedly existed, as in the United States. What did the Constitution of the United States provide with regard to the question of procedure? The provision was contained in one short sentence, which ran as follows: "Each House may determine the Rules of its proceedings." If it were to be said that every act which was done in the exercise of that power was part of the Constitution the person who said it would be talking egregious nonsense. It might as well be said that every Act of Parliament was part of the British Constitution, and that therefore every amendment of an Act of Parliament, however trivial, was an amendment of the Constitution. Those who said that the slight change now proposed in the form of procedure of the House of Commons was a Constitutional change were stretching the word "Constitution" until it cracked and became wholly meaningless. To say that this was a great Constitutional change was balderdash and nonsense. He could not help thinking that most of the speeches which had been made against the proposal were made by hon. Members before they had seen it. They were speeches which were directed not against the proposal before the House, but a totally different proposal—a proposal which owed its origin to a very distinguished and respected man, the late Mr. John Bright. What Mr. Bright proposed in 1886 was exactly the opposite of the proposal now before the House. Of course, his reference was to Ireland, but every word that Mr. Bright said of Ireland was more true of Scotland, because he might have entertained this doubt with regard to the former, that the Irish Members were not loyal. Whatever might be said about the Scottish Members, the question of loyalty did not apply in their case, and therefore what Mr. Bright said of Ireland was, *à fortiori*, true of Scotland. His proposal was that there should be a Standing Order—this was not a Standing Order—of the House by which all Bills relating to Ireland or to Scotland, as the case might be, should, after the First Reading, which was to be a purely formal transaction, be referred to a Committee exclusively composed of Irish Members, or, as the case might be. of Scottish Members. There were three leading features in Mr. Bright's proposal —(1) that the Committee should be exclusively National; (2) that it should have the Second Reading stage of a Bill in its own hands; (3) that all Bills should be compulsorily referred to this Committee, if they referred exclusively to those two countries. This, therefore, was a most important and vital change, because, so long as the Standing Order was in force, it would be impossible for a Government to force upon Ireland or upon Scotland any measure of which the majority of the Scottish or Irish Members disapproved. From the negative point of view, it protected those nationalities from hostile legislation by majorities in the House of Commons; and from the positive point of view, it left only a vetoing power to the House on the Third Reading stage. In these circumstances he should have thought that a proposal of that kind, emanating from so great a man and so distinguished a statesman, not to say so pronounced a Unionist, would have been received with more respect by the followers of that Party. More than a year ago the Scottish Members asked the Government to adopt that proposal, but instead of doing so the Government had proposed something quite different. This Committee was not to be a National Committee, seeing that it was to consist of Scottish Members with 15 other Members; the Second Reading stage of a Bill was not to be committed to its charge; and, most important of all, no Bill was to be referred to the Committee except by Order of the House. He would have been glad if a year ago the Government had been able to see their way to adopt Mr. Bright's proposal, because what was the position in which they found themselves in Scotland? The late Solicitor General for Scotland, in a speech which he delivered in this Debate, drew attention to the fact that in the course of the Parish Councils Bill there was one occasion on which he discovered that a majority of 10 Members in England had been overruled on an English question by Scottish and Irish votes. He could occupy a long time in stating the experiences of the Scottish Members, but he would be content with one example. On the Local Government Bill, brought in by the Conservative Government in 1889, the Scottish Members moved that the County Councils in Scotland should have power to look after the public interests in regard to public rights of way. That question was of peculiar importance in Scotland, and the Scottish Members voted in favour of it in the following manner: 10 supporters of the Government voted with the Government in opposition to the proposal, 10 supporters of the Government voted against the Government, and 39 of the Liberal Party voted also, so that there was a majority of 49 to 10. To represent that in English figures—supposing it had been a question of England, they would have had 337 English Members on one side, and 68 English Members on the other. If the majority of 337 to 68 were overruled by Scottish votes he would admit that England had a very great grievance. He would read one sentence only from a speech by Mr. Bright at Birmingham in 1886. He said, of his wider proposal—

> "What can be the harm? I ask you, as reasonable men, as men of business, if it is not a reasonable thing to try a scheme like this?"

And he also said—

> "It could be done in the simplest manner, and in one night of the House of Commons."

If Mr. Bright had lived now he would have known that the House of Commons did not move quite so fast. The next point of objection that was taken to the proposal was this: they were told that it was wholly subversive of immemorial precedent, for the Leader of the Opposition had said this—

> "We are asked for the first time to introduce this principle of nationality into our Committees in a manner wholly subversive of the immemorial precedent set by this House."

And his other point was this—

> "That Committees are divided between the Parties in the same proportion as they are represented in the House."

The idea that a Committee ought to represent Parties in this House was totally inconsistent with the invariable practice. The invariable practice with respect to all Special and Select Committees to which all Public Bills were referred had been that the Government of the day were allowed a majority of only one, and never more. In fact, until 1883, when the Grand Committees were introduced, the idea was never suggested that a Committee of this House ought to be composed in the same manner as Parties in this House. In the case of Grand Committees, a different principle was naturally adopted. These Committees were nominated for Bills applicable to the whole United Kingdom, and of course they ought to represent the various sections of the House. But his second point was—and this was the great grievance of the Leader of the Opposition—that they were to be asked to introduce the principle of nationality for the first time. He thought he could give precedents. The House would remember that they were not creating a Scottish Committee. In 1882 an Irish Bill (the Union Officers' Superannuation Bill) was referred to a Committee of 15, composed of 13 Irish Members, one Irishman with an English seat, and a Treasury official. He wished to show the House that during the Government of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, whenever a Scottish Committee was made to deal with a Scottish Bill, the Government recognised the principle of nationality to a greater extent than was proposed by the present scheme before the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman is devoting himself to me, as I gather that he is, I may say that he has entirely mistaken my argument. I never suggested that if Scotsmen happen to be interested in a Bill they should not be put on in that capacity. But they are not put on as Scotsmen; only as Members of this House.

MR. HUNTER said, that was one of those metaphysical subtleties for which Scotsmen were frequently blamed. But whether they were *qua* Scotsmen or Scotsmen in fact, he did not care. What were the facts? The Limited Owners Bill had nine Scotsmen, one Irishman, and one Englishman. The Private Bill Procedure Bill had 19 Scotsmen and seven Englishmen. Then came the

Burgh Police Bill, which stuck in the House of Commons for 15 years, and was got through by appointing a Committee of 22 Scottish Members, two Scotsmen with English seats, and two English Members. So that they had a proportion of 22 to 4. In the year 1890 a very important measure, the Scottish Police Superannuation Bill, was referred to a Select Committee of 21. When that Committee was first struck every Member of the 21 were Scotch Members, and there was not a single Englishman amongst them. It so happened that the Solicitor General of the day was raised to the Bench and a vacancy was created, and in order to have something to swear by they appointed the Member for Ipswich, who was a Scotsman, to fill the vacancy. What was the result? When the Bill he last referred to went into Committee it was a measure which, in addition to a charge of £40,000 got from the Exchequer, would have imposed a burden of £60,000 on the Scottish ratepayers. When it emerged from the Committee not a penny of burden was thrown on the Scottish ratepayers. In the year 1892 not a single Scottish Member got a day for a Private Bill. In 1893 they were equally unlucky in the ballot, and this year not a single Scottish private Member had got a day for a Bill. Assuming that Scottish Members got all the time that could be reasonably hoped for after making allowance for the Imperial business and the Estimates, it was a very small portion of time which remained for the legislation of this country. Of that time Scotland was not entitled to more than one-tenth. The plan of the Government would relieve the House of one stage only. It did not deprive the House of the power of dealing with the details of a Bill. The Report stage was reserved for the House, and on that stage every line and every word of a Bill was under the jurisdiction of the House. Some hon. Members had suggested that they should refer Scottish Bills to an ordinary Grand Committee. In such a Committee they would have about 10 Scottish Members. A quorum was 20; and what would be their chances of getting a quorum if the whole of the Members, with the exception of the 10, belonged to England? All that was proposed by the Government was that Scottish Bills should be referred to those persons who knew the wants and wishes of the constituencies in Scotland, who were familiar with the wants of Scotland, and who were able to bring their knowledge to bear upon Scottish measures. Any hon. Members who voted against this Motion would assert this proposition, that under no circumstances might any Scottish Bill whatever be properly sent to a Committee of the kind. He did not suppose that anything like every Scottish Bill would be referred to the Committee. The reference of Bills to the Committee must be in the hands of the House. The proposal was a moderate one, and was intended to provide for what he thought would prove to be a limited class of cases. What was the advantage of this Committee to Scotland? It was very little. It did not emancipate them from the thraldom of an English majority. It did not remove the incubus of a foreign majority. But it did make it possible, consistently with a reasonable demand on the time of the House, that they should get some of the arrears of Scottish legislation removed; and when English Members came to deal with the Reports of these Committees on the Report stage, it would be an advantage to them to know what was the opinion of Scottish Members. If then, with their eyes open, English Members thought they ought to overrule Scottish Members, by all means let them do so. It was their right. But if they did overrule the Scottish Members, they would know what they were doing. Under the present system it was impossible for any English Member to know what Scottish opinion was until the question had been first decided in the House. He trusted a measure of this kind, so moderate, so reasonable, and so limited, and having only one object—namely, saving the time of the House—would commend itself to the House generally. There were some Members who did not desire to save the time of the House—who desired, on the contrary, to waste the time of the House; and from that quarter alone they had received, and would still receive, embittered and venomous opposition.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I will not begin by speaking of the "foreign incubus" which the hon. Member thought was the word to use with regard to the influence of "the predominant partner" in the general affairs of the country. What I should wish, in the first instance, to point out is the extraordinary course which this Debate has taken. We have heard the views of a certain number of Scotch Members, and we have heard one Cabinet Minister. But I notice with some degree of interest that no English supporter of the Government has so far expressed the slightest approval of their proposals. I do not know whether we shall be favoured this evening with the opinions of the hon. Member for Bedford, who on previous occasions has denounced the proposal which is now before the House. I do not see him in his place; but I hope that he will descend from the Olympian heights on which he generally dwells, and, having pondered the question, will give us his majestic advice on the subject. We should have liked also to hear hon. Members representing English constituencies replying to some of the arguments which have been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition and others. We should have been glad to hear the Home Secretary, even though he represents a Scotch constituency; but he prefers to address an audience at Huddersfield rather than the House of Commons. We have been promised the early intervention of a Cabinet Minister, but I see no signs yet of that intervention. I think we were entitled at an earlier portion of this Debate to know what is the answer of Her Majesty's Government to some of the questions which have been put. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has asked whether this general proposal should afterwards be applied to Wales and Ireland. It is a fair question. Is this Motion part of a general policy, or is it specially devised for Scotland? I do not say that it is a polemical disadvantage, but it is a disadvantage in looking at the merits of the case that such a long time has elapsed before we really know the views of Her Majesty's Government on this point. I do not think that this plan of hanging back so long promotes the despatch of business. Hon. Members cannot complain, when we are not favoured with the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to a number of serious points, if we demand further time until we can induce the Government to enter the lists and cross swords with us. Therefore, do not let it be said that we have lengthened this Debate unduly. If there had been an earlier intervention on the part of the Government I believe it would rather have shortened debate. Is this proposal of the Government one which is likely to further the object of saving the time of the House? The Government have obstructed the business of the House by introducing this proposal. There are no Scotch Bills down for Second Reading yet; but there is one Bill which, I believe we may say, it is the intention of the Government to refer to this Scotch Grand Committee—the Parish Councils Bill for Scotland. We ought to have been told by hon. Members for Scotland what class of Bills they wished to send to this Grand Committee. At present we are putting up this large and important machinery without having any idea of the work which the machinery will have to do. Would it not have been more business-like if it had been proposed that the Scotch Parish Councils Bill should be referred to a Scotch Committee, instead of making this wide and general proposal? If that had been done it would have saved much of this Debate. But no doubt it would have been too preposterous, after the Prime Minister has boasted that the English Parish Councils Bill was passed by Irish votes, for hon. Members to claim that the Scotch Parish Councils Bill should be withdrawn from the consideration of English Members. I quite understand why that particular Bill was not selected for this experiment, and why they preferred, on the contrary, to have a general Motion. Well, we see with regard to the saving of time that the Bills are to be referred by Order to this Grand Committee. Is it not apparent that there will be a Debate on every occasion that is possible on these Bills which have not been read a second time? There will then be a Debate as to whether they are fit subjects to be referred to this Committee. I shall ask before I sit down, with regard to the three or four Scotch Bills in regard to which Scotch Members are anxious, whether they are Bills which it is proposed should be referred to this Grand Committee. If there is to be a Grand Committee to which general Scotch Bills are to be referred, it is a grave question whether English Members will not think on many occasions that it will be right to move when English Bills are considered that Scotch Members should be removed off these Grand Committees in order to put Englishmen in regard to the discussion of these Bills in the same position as that which Scotchmen are to hold? We have been told a great deal as to the ignorance on the part of English Members in regard to Scotch Bills. Are we to assume that we know nothing of Scotland, and that a Scotchman knows everything of England? We are incapable of discussing the question of the Disestablishment of the Scotch Church, but hon. Members opposite, from Scotland, will gaily take part in the discussion as to the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. The hon. Members for Scotland, I suppose, after discussing Scotch Disestablishment—if ever they get in that position—would afterwards take part in the Committee stages of a Bill to disestablish the Welsh Church. If they did so they would be entirely throwing away the whole of the argument which they now urge—namely, that on the plea of justice they are entitled to a Grand Committee. I do not think, and I do not believe the Government can think, that they can save much time in any way by this proposal. Then why do they make it? I do not think that their Scotch supporters are very much enamoured of it. I think, in the Debate on Scotch Home Rule, one hon. Member used the phrase that this was a temporary makeshift, and another that it was a stop-gap. I think we may call it something more than merely a Committee which is to deal with the Parish Councils Bill. Possibly it is a Scotch Home Rule Suspensory Bill. It is to be a Bill which is to accustom the English public to legislate by nationalities. I will suggest another alternative which I believe to be the real fact why this measure is proposed. The Government before they proceeded to their Budget proposals and Registration Bill had got to square all the various sections of their supporters, so they proposed for the Metropolis an Equalisation of Rates Bill, for Wales they coquet with a Disestablishment Bill; they give something to the evicted tenants of Ireland, and they go to Scotland and choose this Grand Committee as a sop to their Scottish supporters. How far this will satisfy their Scotch supporters I do not know. I think, after all, the Scotch supporters of the Government need not be dissatisfied for they have got almost as much as the others, because all the measures which they propose are placed by the Government upon the same platform of hopelessness. I doubt if they will carry any of them, and so the Scotch Members need not be blamed very seriously if they only get a piece of machinery while the others are promised a piece of work which may not, after all, be accomplished. But is there not something more in this? Are we not to see in this proposal, to some extent, the hand of our Scotch Prime Minister? He declared very frankly that as regards Scotch Home Rule that if he was in a private capacity, as I understood him, he would join the storming party which was to take us in the rear with regard to Scotch Home Rule, while we were fighting Ireland on the flank. That was to be a storming party, but now it would appear he is proceeding by sap and mine, and preparing the ground for that evolution or devolution to which he looks forward with such satisfaction. I should like to have a reply to this point. Is this part of a general scheme, or is it to be limited in the mind of the Government to Scotland? What I am prepared to show, and what every Member feels, is that you cannot stop by simply granting Scotland this Grand Committee. If you give it to Scotland you must give it to Wales if she asks for it. Is there one single argument why Wales should not have it if Scotland is to have it? Might not the Welsh make precisely the same speeches as the Scotch Members? I am surprised they have not, because I saw a Notice on the Paper claiming the extension of this principle to Wales; and the Government and every Member must know that if this Grand Committee is granted to Scotland you must have a Welsh Grand Committee, and then why not an Irish Grand Committee? My right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London pointed out that in 1882 the Irish had demanded a separate Irish Grand Committee. I say distinctly that so far as this will be a new departure you will see that in this proposal there lies the separate legislation by nationalities of a certain class of business, whether that business is controversial or non-controversial. If you give a Grand Committee to Scotland you must give it to Wales and Ireland, and, therefore, I ask whether in our arrangement for this Grand Committee we are not bound to take into consideration whether we should constitute similar Committees precisely in the same manner and on the same lines in the case of Wales or Ireland? Perhaps it will be demanded, for instance, that the Crofters' Act should be referred to this Grand Committee? If so, will the Irish Evicted Tenants' Bill be referred to an Irish Grand Committee? That does not lie, I think, within the present purview of the mind of the Government, but I insist upon this: that if we give a Grand Committee to Scotland it ought to be hedged round with such precautions and so constructed that if the Government should be compelled and should insist upon its being conferred on other parts of the United Kingdom the same class of machinery should be applied. Suppose we pass the Grand Committee in its present form, and in another Session a Grand Committee is moved for in reference to Irish legislation, and we were then to insert certain precautions—for instance, with regard to land or finance, or the rights of property—it would be immediately said, that that was an insult to Ireland, because we had granted a Scotch Committee to Scotland on different terms. Therefore, I say that whatever we do now we must not look at this question from the point of view of Scotland, or from the point of view of the hon. Member who last addressed the House, who treats it as a little businesslike proposal. But would it be a businesslike proposal to refer all Irish Bills to an Irish Grand Committee? I think you would find not, if you were to see the proceedings which would take place in Committee Room No. 15, which perhaps might be the site which would be chosen for an Irish Grand Committee. Hon. Members deceive themselves if they look upon this as a merely and simply businesslike proposal. This is a proposal in what the Secretary for Scotland called the most important process of Committee stages, to proceed by nationalities in the framing of legislation. That is the proposal, and if that is so I say you must take all precautions and so arrange your Grand Committees that you will be able to apply them to other nationalities as well as to Scotland. For my part, I am totally against this devolution or legislation by nationalities. I believe that every nationality gains by being associated with other nationalities, and your legislation is improved by the very contradiction of character and intellect in the different nationalities. That is my own conviction. You cannot view this simply as a Scotch proposal as it has been placed before us by the Government. That being my view upon the general case, and not knowing whether the Government look upon this as an isolated step or as part of a system which, after trial, would be extended, I am bound to treat the matter from this point of view, both as an isolated step and as part of a general system, and to inquire what would be the results. The Home Secretary told his friends at Huddersfield that this was a homœopathic dose. But homœopathic doses are occasionally dangerous, because the smallness of the dose encourages the repetition of the doses, and you may be poisoned by homœopathic as well as by the more sustaining doses. I look at this little businesslike proposal, and I point out that the hon. Member for North Aberdeen gave us no hint as to the Bills which would be referred to this Committee.

Mr. HUNTER: I should say exactly the same character of Bills as were referred by a Conservative Government to a Select Committee.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; but that is to compare a Committee in which no step in legislation is taken with a Committee which legislates. We have no objection whatever to inquiry such as is made by a Select Committee. The hon. Member compared two things that are totally dissimilar, a Select Committee and a Grand Committee, but he did not inform the House that a Grand Committee is a miniature of the House, and a Select Committee is not. It appears to me that if the only object of hon. Members opposite is to get inquiry and bring Scotch opinion to bear on Bills, let us follow the course we have hitherto pursued, and give Scotch Members every opportunity to ventilate Scotch opinion, but do not withdraw the Bills from any of their stages in this House. Two arguments are mainly used by the Scotch Members. The first is, that the Scotch

Members do not get enough business done; the other is, that they are overridden by English opinion; and it is this which hurts them more than anything else. Before an English audience a right hon. Gentleman opposite has spoken in a tone of indignation of the way in which, as he said, Scotch opinion was overridden by English opinion. Why, we are overridden every day by Scotch, Irish, and Welsh opinion! And the right hon. Gentleman is a Member of a Government which is coercing an English majority every day by Scotch, Irish, and Welsh votes. In every Bill which is passed this Session it is highly probable the English majority will be overridden by the other nationalities. We shall seek to remedy the difficulty by changing the majorities in the other countries. I do not complain; but I say the Scotch have no special grievance in this matter at all. An hon. Member said that no private Members passed a Scotch Bill during a particular Session. They are not so clever in combining to get their Bills passed as are the Irish Members. The Irish outnumber them to an extent; but, even taking that into consideration, it is extraordinary the luck or skill with which the Irish Members find days for their Bills. But how many English private Members have carried Bills in the same period? If Scotch Members are to have a Grand Committee for the purpose of passing private Members' Bills, will not the other nationalities ask to be placed on the same footing? The silent Government has not told us whether they intend to refer the Bills of private Members to this Committee, and they must take their chance then as to a Second Reading. I think an hon. Member said they had got no Second Readings. If it be not private Members' Bills, what Bills are to be referred to the Scotch Committee? We know that one is to be the Scotch Local Government Bill. But is it not monstrous that after Scotch and other nationalities have assisted us in passing the English County Councils Act, and have modified many proposals in Committee, they should claim to have this important stage of their own Bill to themselves? Of course, if they have, other stages of the Bill will have to be debated in this House at greater length than they otherwise would be. What other Bills are to be referred to this Committee? On this point we have no light. It has been said the Grocers' Licensing Bill ought to be dealt with by Scotch Members according to their own views. I will lay down this proposition—that no Bill, even if it refers exclusively to Scotland, which affects Imperial Revenue, can be looked upon as a purely Scotch Bill. It is said that only Scotch Members can understand the mysteries of Scotch education. However that may be, education is mixed up with finance. We gave free education to Scotland at the cost of the Imperial Exchequer. Would it be fair to leave Scotch Members to decide upon Bills involving drafts upon the Imperial Exchequer? There was an interesting meeting of Scotch Members last November, and they discussed a list of Bills to be referred to the Scotch Committee. I understand that registration for Scotland is to be dealt with in the same Bill as English registration. The Bills named at the meeting were the Local Veto Bill, the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church, the Parish Councils Bill, and a Bill for extending the Crofters' Act. I believe the Parish Councils Bill was put low down, and there was a close run between Disestablishment and Local Option; I am not sure whether Local Option was not in advance of Disestablishment. Is it asked that the Scotch Local Veto Bill shall be referred to the Scotch Committee before the Chancellor of the Exchequer gives England an opportunity of passing this measure? Would it be business? If the Government propose to refer this Bill to the Scotch Committee there will be a serious Debate whether the principle shall be settled for Scotland exclusively. [An hon. MEMBER: What about Sunday closing?] Well, it is not on the list. [An hon. MEMBER: It was passed 50 years ago.] I am discussing not Bills that are passed, but Bills it is proposed to refer to the Scotch Committee. When it was passed we had something to say, and Scotch Members would have something to say if Sunday Closing for England were proposed. Would a Disestablishment Bill be considered a fit subject to be referred to the Committee? I scarcely think the Government would say so. If it be a subject to be referred to the Grand Committee, where is the point of uncontroversial

Bills? Where are those uncontroversial subjects we were told about? Nearly every one of the measures put before us is eminently controversial. Local Veto in Scotland is controversial, Church Disestablishment is controversial, Parish Councils—judging from our experience on the English Bill—we shall probably find controversial. Therefore, you have not got that group of measures ready which is to occupy this Committee when it meets. I should now wish, for a few moments, to examine the constitution of the Committee, as to which a good deal fell from the hon. and learned Member for Aberdeen. I was astonished at the argument of the Secretary for Scotland, that this Grand Committee was going to be formed on the lines of the present Grand Committee. He said that was his great argument in favour of this proposal. I said at the time, "Good Heavens! if that is so, what are his other arguments?" because a worse argument was never submitted to the House. My right hon. Friend nearme, in pointing to this, made a very good point which has not yet been replied to. In the Grand Committees you first get a miniature of the House and then add 15 specialists. In the present case you first take 70 specialists, and then you add to them 15 ignoramuses from England. That is an entire departure from our system of forming Grand Committees, and yet it is called a parallel case. I suppose because the number 15 is made use of in both cases the right hon. Gentleman thinks it makes the same case of them. But if it is not for the sake of precedent, why have you fixed on this figure of 15? Again, absolutely no explanation. There are obvious inconveniences and drawbacks to this system, which has been denounced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian and by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). Select Committees have been referred to, but we are not dealing with Select Committees. We are dealing with Grand Committees; and what hon. Members opposite have to show is that it is not a grave change, whether they call it Constitutional or not, to depart from constituting Grand Committees so that each will be a miniature or microcosm of the House, as required by Standing Order 48. Under what Standing Order is this Scottish Committee to be placed? The Committee of Selection have, with regard to the other Grand Committees, principles laid down for their guidance, which make their work comparatively easy. But in this case they have no guide how they are to choose the 15 additional Members, and they will have an extremely difficult task in the absence of any guidance from the Government. Are they to choose the 15 partly from the majority and partly from the minority of the House? They are not told. All that you do tell them is that the 15 are not to be Scotchmen. Beyond this, the Government offers the Committee of Selection no guide whatever in this matter. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Sir C. Cameron) was extremely candid on this point. He said you can only work it if the majority on the Grand Committee is in harmony with the Government, and, therefore, while you give Scotland her Grand Committee, you would not be able to give England a Grand Committee now, because Her Majesty's Government are in a minority in England. There is a good deal of force in that argument. You have laid down the rule that, where you have legislation, there the composition is always to be what the composition of the House is. It is impossible that this proposal of the Government can be applied to the other portions of the United Kingdom; and therefore, as I maintain that it is essential that any proposal should be applicable to all alike, the House ought to reject the present proposal for Scotland upon the ground that it is not applicable to the rest of the United Kingdom. On the question of overriding the majority, we in England are not to have a Grand Committee because the British majority would have its way. There has not been an attempt to give a reply to this, and I invite any Minister who is going to speak on this question to give us an answer to it. You cannot limit this proposal to Scotland. If we are to legislate by nationalities, then the scheme must be suitable also for England. Then comes the point put by the Leader of the Opposition, and not yet replied to. If a Bill passes through a Grand Committee not representing the general majority of the House, the whole of what is done in Committee will be upset on Report. I will illustrate the point by referring to the Local Veto Bill. If the Scottish Members are to settle their Local Veto Bill, the English ought to settle the English Local Veto Bill, without the assistance of Scotsmen, Welshmen, or Irishmen. They cannot claim to come and vote us down. What will the Government do? Will the Government accept the Bill as it has passed through the English Committee, or will it reverse the whole of that which in Committee has been ascertained to be the wish of the English majority? Supposing we had had the Parish Councils Bill in a Committee of English Members only, it would have been a very different Bill. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite will accept that. ["No!"] I will not repeat the Prime Minister's observation that the Bill was passed by Irish votes, because that is not absolutely correct. The Second Reading was not passed by Irish votes. But Irish votes did determine the form which the administration of charities and bequests left by Englishmen should take, and the Irish and Scotch votes helped to determine the limit of population of purely English parishes beyond which there must be Parish Councils. I wonder what would have been the course the Government would have taken had that Bill been left to the English majority and altered according to their wishes. Would they have thrown it out; or would they have brought in their allies and deliberately, in the face of England, have changed all the points they desired to alter by Irish and Scottish votes? There is no answer to that. The same remark would apply if a Conservative Government were in power, in the case of a Scottish Grand Committee with a majority of Scottish and Radical Members, who could introduce a number of provisions in the Bill to which the Government would object. It has not even been hinted at how the difficulty could be met, and truly it is a most serious difficulty. I see one point which hon. Members opposite may consider an advantage; but let us see if it is really so. It will be said that we shall, at all events, know what is the pure voice of Scotland on any matter, and the Irish view will be the same. But then comes the English view, and English opinion will also be known to have been overridden by the votes of Irish and Scottish Members. What would be the result of overriding the wishes of such a Grand Committee? Increased ease in the working of the Parliamentary machine? On the contrary, there would be increased friction in every direction. It may be the wish of some, looking to their proclivities in the direction of Home Rule, to bring out all the difficulties in a glaring form in order to force legislation by nationalities. But we on this side do not wish to intensify any difficulties there may be with regard to the processes or the product of legislation. The hon. and learned Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) spoke of the views of Mr. Bright. But Mr. Bright proposed his scheme not as an amendment of the Business of the House, but as an alternative to Home Rule. Can the right hon. Gentleman opposite hold out any hope that by giving the Irish a Grand Committee they would solve the question of Home Rule? If so, then we may appeal to the precedent of Mr. Bright, and say that his views should determine us in reference to this proposal. I would ask the House very seriously this question: Do they really desire legislation by nationalities? On some questions on which English Members are uninformed, such as hypothec, with regard to which I doubt whether even Scotch Members themselves know all its mysteries, I can quite see that hon. Members may desire it, and may think it would facilitate business if such Bills were referred to a Grand Committee. But you cannot draw a distinction between these and the great controversial Bills which cannot be sent to Grand Committee; and if you set up a nationality to legislate at one stage, and the whole four nationalities to legislate at another stage, I say you are exposing this House of Commons to such friction that you will be driven, further on, even to four separate Parliaments. I ask English Liberals, not one of whom has addressed the House upon this subject, not one of whom has condescended to say they are prepared to tell their constituents they are willing to see English interests placed in an inferior position, which it is clear unless you have Home Rule all round they will be placed in—Do they wish to separate the domestic legislation of the various parts of the United Kingdom? What would the Liberal Party have been in the past, where would be the roll of all the Statutes they have passed, if they had not had the Scotch Members to assist them in English legislation? I would pause, if I were hon. Members, before I would part with the influence of Scotch Liberalism on English legislation; and, whatever views I may hold, I distinctly prefer that all parts of the United Kingdom should legislate together, whatever the political, I would almost say whatever the social, result may be. Each of our nationalities has its separate characteristics, its separate force of character, its separate intellect. Is it not best that in the future, as in the past, we should go on together upon legislation which is common to the United Kingdom, common in principle, common even in details, rather than that we should legislate in these weighty affairs in separate Committee rooms? Our legislation in the past has been an amalgam of English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh politics. For my part, I think that amalgam is the truest metal from which you can forge the girders on which the destinies of this country may securely rest.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): I am sure that neither the Government nor those who support them in their present proposal have any reason to complain of the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. There was a great deal of good humoured banter in it; there was a long tissue of those hypothetical conundrums in which the right hon. Gentleman delights. But there was none of that more acrid spirit which, I am sorry to say, was displayed towards some of us at least in the earlier nights of this Debate. He began by making some complaint against the Government because we were hanging back in the Debate. He made a great complaint that only one Cabinet Minister had spoken. Well, I am not one who stands very much on the dignity of a Cabinet Minister, who, after all, is a mortal like other Members of this House. But, as a matter of fact, there had been only one ex-Cabinet Minister who had spoken, and my right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate spoke on the first night, and no one could speak with greater personal authority than my right hon. Friend. But I was certainly somewhat alarmed—knowing that I should have to follow the right hon. Gentleman—when he said that he had had no answer to some of the questions that had been put to us. I was careful to take note of what these questions were, and find that, after all, they were two. The first terrible poser which the right hon. Gentleman addressed to us was as to our intentions of extending this proposal to other parts of the Three Kingdoms, as to which I shall have something to say before I sit down; and the second was, that he asked us triumphantly, "Will this save time?"

MR. GOSCHEN: If the right hon. Gentleman is giving the catalogue of my questions——

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have done with them.

MR. GOSCHEN: I would remind him I also asked what were the Bills it is proposed to refer to the Committee; why the figure 15 had been taken; and if the right hon. Gentleman taxes his memory, he will remember that I put other questions.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There are a good many subsidiary questions which I shall be happy to answer, but the two questions which the right hon. Gentleman was breathless to deliver were those which I have mentioned. Well, Sir, our object—I will not say our whole object, but the great part of our object—was to save the time of the House for Scottish business; and if it is saved for Scottish business, it will be saved for other business, because it will remove, so far as it operates, that business from the way of other business of the House. We look upon this as a modest proposal; and if the right hon. Gentleman complains, as he appears to do, that many arguments have not been answered, it is not so much because they are unanswerable, but because, however great force there is in them, they apply to something which is not in the least contemplated by the Government in bringing forward this proposal. Therefore it happens, as sometimes occurs, that arguments do not answer each other, for the simple reason that they are moving on parallel lines, and never meet. But what is it that we ground the proposal now before the House upon? We make two allegations. We say, in the first place, that Scottish business has been hindered and scantily attended to of recent years, and in increasing degree. And the second allegation, which for my part I regard as quite as important, is this—that Scottish opinion upon Scottish subjects has not received its due weight. Are we right in the first allegation? It is a serious complaint to make from our point of view, because the Liberal Party, at all events, are those who think that there is too much delay, too much hesitation in legislation, and that, whatever may have been the case in former years, now the mind of the country is so active and so well-informed that matters come to this House for legislation in a state of preparation for action which the House of Commons was not accustomed to in years now long gone by. Therefore, there is no longer any necessity for dangling and dawdling and playing with a question when the subject comes before this House. In the great majority of instances it is ripe for being dealt with, if only the House could find the time to do it. That is the spirit which actuates us, and I can honestly say that any delay to which we are party is forced upon us by circumstances and is not of our creation. I am well aware of the tremendous forces in this House, and out of it, that make for delay in legislation. Those who contribute to the creation of those forces do not all proceed from the same motive or intention. There are many Members who may have an objection to a particular piece of legislation, to an individual measure which is introduced, and they oppose it by all the means in their power. That is an honourable and legitimate opposition, deserving of all respect, even from those who do not join in it. Then there is a certain section in the House, and not a very small section, who go a little further, and think we have too much legislation, and that they do the State and the public good service in hindering legislation as much as they can. That is also a perfectly intelligible and perfectly honourable opinion and motive, which again I would treat with every possible respect. But I regret to say, Sir, that within a short time there has come into play another set of motives altogether, and there appear to be some Members of the House whose antipathy is not directed so much to individual measures, or to the reform of our laws, as to the Government of the day, and whose object almost avowedly is, by their action, to prevent the Government of the day obtaining such credit as they might get by the passing of measures, whether they consider such measures good or not.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: I would like to know their names.

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I think the noble Lord knows some of them, although it is not a motive which I for one moment would impute to him. That, I say, is a new element, a new spirit in dealing with legislation in this House, and it has, no doubt, served to increase the delay and the hindrance that has existed in past years. So far as these causes affect Scottish business, they have undoubtedly increased in intensity. Some hon. Members who have taken part in these Debates have referred to the last Parliament, and have said it is the fault of the Government that you cannot pass Scottish Bills, because they point to last Parliament and say, "Remember the very important legislation on Scottish subjects which the late Government was able to carry through the House." Yes, Sir, but shall I say frankly what the reason for that was? The reason was that the Opposition was as anxious or even more anxious to pass the legislation than the Government themselves; that the Opposition gave every assistance in their power, and only exerted themselves to carry the legislation further than the somewhat reluctant Government was willing to go. Therefore, for my part, I am prepared to face some objections and some anomalies in order to find a remedy for this delay. But there is not only the delay in Scottish business; there is, as I have said, the suppression, and in some cases obliteration, of Scottish feeling in our legislation. I naturally approach this subject from the point of view of a Scotsman. I have some difficulty in realising it, but I am the father of Scottish Members, and in that capacity my memory goes back to very early times—times spoken of as if they were halcyon times—when the Scottish Members met in the Lord Advocate's room, and discussed the business of the year quietly, and never troubled the English and Irish Members on their matters at all, and at the end of the Session there was a certain amount of legislation to be put to their credit. These were the old dilettante days, before the extension of household suffrage. With the extension of household suffrage there came the introduction of an earnest spirit into the House, and the previous hole-and-corner arrangements became impracticable, and there was a right and necessary demand that the business of Scotland should be transacted in the face of the House, and in Committees of the House, where public responsibility exists. Since then there has been nothing but constant complaint. This complaint culminated in the case of the Local Government Bill for Scotland, which was passed during the last Parliament. During the progress in Committee of that Bill we saw again and again Scottish Members discussing points of the greatest interest and importance to their country, and expressing considerable unanimity on these points; but when the Division bell was rung, other Members came in from all quarters and overrode the opinion of the Scottish Members. The question involved was not a Party question, and it is not on that ground that I complain, but the fact remains that we were overridden; and when the House ascertained the feeling and opinion of the Scottish Members, it was too late to give effect to it. Since then there has been in all quarters in Scotland an earnest desire, if possible, to find some remedy for that state of matters. We feel that if we are to be overruled it should be done, as my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) in his most able defence of this Resolution made clear, with the full knowledge on the part of the House of what the opinion of Scotland, as represented by the Scottish Members, is. Therefore it is that we propose this Grand Committee. We have heard it spoken of in very strong terms by the Leader of the Opposition, who talked of it as revolutionising the practice of this House, and upsetting our immemorial traditions, and so forth. These are the exaggerated phrases that he has been obliged to use in order to make his somewhat puffed-up case against the Resolution. We know it is an innovation; we admit that it is an innovation. When the right hon. Gentleman asks whether it is in accordance with the ordinary Rule as to Grand Committees that it should be an exact reflex, as near as may be, of the political opinions of the House, we know that it is not so. It is because we know that what we seek to obtain in the representation of Scottish opinion cannot be obtained by an ordinary Grand Committee that we bring forward the Resolution and submit it to the House. We are told that this proposal is a recognition of nationality, but I imagine that that objection is somewhat departed from, because hon. Members in the course of the Debate have adduced instance after instance where Select Committees at least have been appointed with a direct reference to nationality. But we are told that the Resolution is improper, because it includes all the Scottish Members. The Leader of the Opposition laid down the extraordinary proposition that on Scottish subjects Scottish Members did not represent Scottish opinion. The right hon. Gentleman had the courage to assert that the apparent majority represented by the Members on one side and the other of this House does not represent a similar division of opinion in Scotland, for he said the votes cast upon either side at the last General Election were about equal. That may be so by the somewhat magnificent arithmetic of the right hon. Gentleman, but there is a trifling difference of 40,000 votes in favour of those whom he would call, perhaps, the Gladstonian Members which, I think, ought to have been taken into reckoning by the right hon. Gentleman. I have looked into this matter, and find that these 40,000 votes represent 8 per cent. of the number of electors who voted. That may not seem a very large proportion, but the right hon. Gentleman was a principal Member of a Government not many years ago which overrode the opinion of Scotland, and coerced Ireland, and controlled the affairs of England, by virtue of a majority which only represented 3 per cent. of those who went to the poll at the General Election. I have also found, singularly enough, that that is the precise proportionate majority which he himself enjoys in the constituency he now represents, and I think he would be very glad to exchange it for the 8 per cent. which is represented in Scotland by the 40,000 votes I have referred to.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR indicated dissent.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The right hon. Gentleman said the votes cast were about equal; but it is of the capacity of Scottish Members that he is almost contemptuous. He was disposed to belittle them because there were so many Englishmen amongst the Scottish Members on this side.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, no.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: In the Debate which interposed itself in the middle of this discussion he referred to my hon. Friend the Member for West Fife (Mr. Birrell) as the Englishman who sits for West Fife, which struck me as a somewhat strange quip to come from the lips of the Scotsman who sits for East Manchester.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not want Home Rule for England.

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: There is no question of Home Rule for England or Home Rule for Scotland. The question is whether an Englishman sitting for a Scottish constituency is entitled to speak in the name of his constituents with authority upon a Scottish subject. Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman there are two classes of those migrated Members—there are those who have crossed the Border northwards or southwards because they have been invited by constituencies out of their own country to do so, and there are those who have crossed the Border because they could not find constituencies in their own country. I will make this offer to the right hon. Gentleman. I will take the Englishmen who sit for Scottish constituencies and transfer them to England in the next General Election within the next two or three years, and I will let him take to Scotland the Scotsmen who sit for English constituencies, and we will see which of us will return the larger number of our men. What have we to do with the birthplace of a Member any more than we have to do with the colour of his hair? What we have to do with is the fact that he is the choice of the electors. To say that any Member is not entitled to represent the opinion of Scotland because he was not born in Scotland——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I never said so.

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The right hon. Gentleman did not go so far as to say that he was not entitled to represent it, but, as I said, he belittled the weight and authority of such a Member upon any purely Scottish subject. But whether Englishmen or Scotsmen, he denies their competence on another most extraordinary ground. He says their opinion is worth little on a Scotch local question, because they are elected on great Party issues. The argument seems to come to this—that no elector and no Representative is entitled to have an opinion upon two subjects at once. We are constantly told, for instance, that if a Member is in favour of Home Rule and also of Disestablishment, his election furnishes no proof that the constituency is in favour of the one policy or the other. Every opinion that can be professed, I suppose, is thus to be taken by itself. But the most preposterous of all these ideas is that a Member is not a proper person in this country to speak the opinion on local questions of his constituency, and that we are rather to go, as we have been told, to other Members, representing other constituencies, who from their personal experience are supposed to be better able to speak. I submit that when the Scottish Members give their vote upon purely Scottish questions by a large majority, we are entitled to take that to be the legitimate, honest, and genuine expression of the opinion of the Scottish people, and there is no other way by which we can obtain that opinion. What is this proposal that we make? We propose that such Bills as are determined by the House should be remitted to a substantially Scottish Committee. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) has asked me as to the constitution of the Committee. He has said, "Why do you take all the Scottish Members?" For the very reason that we wish to know the opinion of the Scottish people; and we can only get at that opinion through the votes and the voice of the Representatives of the Scottish people. We add to the Scottish Members 15 Members to be selected by the Committee of Selection. They may choose for that purpose Scotsmen sitting for English constituencies if they think they are particularly qualified to assist the Committee in its deliberations; and if they do so in present circumstances, the probability would be that the large number of the 15 would add to the strength of the Opposition on the Committee, and would go very far, at all events, to approach the disposition of Parties in this House. It would be no punishment to an English Member to be added to this Grand Committee. In 1884 the Scottish Burgh Police Bill was referred to a Select Committee composed of 21 Scottish Members and six English Conservative Members, three of whom were Scotsmen; and I find that at the meetings of that Committee there was a good attendance of the Scottish Members. But there was one of the Scotsmen—an English Member—specially put on to give the Committee his assistance who never attended any meeting of the Committee throughout its whole proceedings. That Member was the Scotsman who then sat for the Borough of Hertford and now sits for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour). It does not appear, therefore, that the duty would be, at all events, oppressive. The right hon. Gentlemen asks me what Bills are to be sent to this Committee; and when he inquired how it was hoped to save time, he made a suggestion in which there was a good deal of force. He said—"Why do you not take the Second Reading of the Scottish Local Government Bill, and then move that it be referred to the Committee?" That was a course that might have been adopted. But I imagine we have first to set up a Grand Committee before we send a Bill to it, which was at least a difficulty in the way. We introduce this proposal as an experiment undoubtedly, and the very first Bill that we should propose to send to the Committee is the Local Government Bill for Scotland. That Bill has no less than 70 clauses, and when we consider the length of time that was spent over the English Local Government Bill last winter, hon. Members can form some conception of the number of days that would be required for the discussion of the Scottish Bill if it was dealt with in Committee of the whole House. If we succeed in inducing the House to send the Bill to this Grand Committee, there will be almost adequate work for the Committee in the provisions of that measure alone. It contains nothing that is not—I will not say of a controversial nature, because that is a word of a doubtful meaning; but it contains nothing of a Party or politically controversial nature. It introduces no high Constitutional principles, and it disturbs no high Constitutional principles; and it is precisely the sort of Bill that could be dealt with with the greatest effect before a Standing Committee of this kind. Allusion has been made to the fundamental difference which exists between England and Scotland in respect of jurisprudence, of religious forms and Churches, and particularly in respect of the administration of local affairs, and of the Poor Law. Therefore, here is a matter entirely affecting Scotland alone embodied in a Bill extending to 70 clauses, which, we think, could with great advantage to Scotland and to the House be referred to the Grand Committee. The right hon. Gentleman has asked whether an Education Bill would be sent to the Committee. I should say so, certainly. Education is a subject in which Scotland has always been immensely ahead of England, and we wish our educational arrangements—although I remember during the last Parliament the right hon. Gentleman did not give us much assistance in that direction—we wish our educational arrangements to be conducted upon Scottish lines, and not upon English lines. And what is the difference? If an Education Bill was treated in Committee of the whole House, all the Members who would take part in the discussion of it would be Scottish Members. The right hon. Gentleman is very properly scrupulous as to drafts on the Exchequer. That would be for the House to determine at the time. But if I were to lay down any rule I should say that any Bill which was mainly and principally a financial Bill would, of course, not go to the Scottish Grand Committee. But we might have a Bill in which incidentally there was some small reference to the Exchequer, and to the relations between the Exchequer and Scotland. Then I am asked as to local veto. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is not aware that, for a great many years back—I should think for 20 years back—there has been a majority of the Scottish Members in favour not of local veto, but in favour of the old principle which was embodied in the Permissive Bill—the principle of local control. There has been a majority, including Conservative Members and Members of all shades of opinion, in favour of that change, and I should have thought it would be perfectly proper and legitimate to send such a Bill to a

Scottish Grand Committee. But that is a matter to be determined by the House on the occasion of the Second Reading of the Bill. When a Bill which is purely and exclusively Scottish was dealt with in this Committee, it would have one great advantage, in that there would not be so much of that reference to Party ties and Party feelings as we necessarily have in the House at large. There would be no Whip to direct Members how to vote on one question and another. In a Grand Committee a Bill is dealt with in a much more conversational and less stiff way than in the House, and with less regard to the obligations of Party allegiance. The further advantage would accrue that the House would see what the Scottish Members wanted, and in the further stages of the Bill the House would have the most absolute power to review, modify, alter, or upset any of the provisions of the Bill. I have treated this question hitherto from the point of view of Scotchmen and Scotland. Where is the danger of appointing such a Committee from that point of view? Where is the danger from the point of view of Scottish interests, Scottish opinion, Scottish wants, assuming, of course, that we all desire that Scottish legislation should proceed on Scottish lines? But what is to be said from the point of view of England and Ireland? The right hon. Gentleman asked if we meant to extend this proposal to England and Ireland. Well, no, Sir. And I will give some reasons why it should not be extended to England. In principle I should have no objection to see it myself, but practically the cases are not the same. What we complain of is that Scotland being in the minority is at a disadvantage. But England is never in the minority—is, in fact, in a majority upon every Grand Committee that can be constituted in an ordinary manner. England's interests always predominate if she chooses to assert them. Scotland's never can unless by some such arrangement as this—on a Grand Committee. That is the answer to the right hon. Gentleman, so far as the necessities of the case are concerned. Another point which seems to me to stand in the way of constituting immediately a Committee of this sort for England is the immense inconvenience of it, because the English Members are so numerous that it would be practically the House itself, and not a Grand Committee of the kind we are seeking to set up. I have spoken of Scotland being in a minority, and let me bring home to hon. Members the fact brought out by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen. My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen referred to the case of the Local Government Bill which we passed in the last Parliament. On the occasions when the Scottish Members voted two, three, four, and even five to one in favour of certain provisions which they desired to see accepted, the English and Irish Members came in and outvoted them. My hon. Friend pointed to a case where the Members from Scotland were 49 for and 10 against. If we applied the same proportion to the English Members, we find the equivalent event on an English Bill would be this—337 to 68. And then supposing there were sufficient Members from Ireland and Scotland, and they came in and outvoted that English majority, that will give English Members some idea of what it is of which we complain. There was an extraordinary view taken of a sort of Utopian House of Commons by the Member for the University of London. The right hon. Gentleman complained that the proposed Committee would have the effect of preventing English Members having any voice in Scottish affairs, and he exclaimed in indignation, "Why are we not to have the privilege of outvoting them when they outvote us?" That looked as if the proper arrangement would be the constitution of the House into sections, each of which would find its highest pleasure in outvoting the other. We do not wish to be outvoted by them. But it is asserted that we do outvote them, and the Parish Councils Bill is referred to as an example. Well, I have looked into a good many Divisions, and I can only find about nine occasions upon which the majority of the Government was not English as well as Imperial, and only two occasions when the English majority against was over 10. Suppose a similar occurrence was to appear on the proposed Grand Committee. In the case of a very small majority there would be no difficulty in the majority of the House upsetting the decision of the Grand Committee. Hon. Gentlemen, it seems to me, do not attach sufficient importance to the power of the House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What about Ireland and Wales?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: If in a future year Ireland and Wales demand, in the same way as Scotland does, the appointment of Grand Committees for their purposes, I see no reason why they should not be granted.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: No Englishman need apply.

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The noble Lord says, "No Englishman need apply." No Englishman need apply, because Englishmen have it all their own way as it is. I have no hostility to English influence. I am very glad we should have a certain amount of English influence. But what I claim is that we should be heard before we are struck, and that it should be ascertained on a Committee such as this what the opinion and wishes of Scotland would make a measure, before the House of Commons proceeds to deal with it in any other fashion. It is an experiment for Scottish purposes. It is avowedly not put forward as a uniform settlement for the general business of the House of Commons. The idea that there is any wrong done to England in the matter is sheer nonsense, because England is and will always be dominant in numbers, and can have no grievance if such a Committee be established. It seems to me that out of our controversies on this subject one thing emerges, and that is that Parliament with its present procedure cannot legislate efficiently for all three portions of the United Kingdom. The best and most complete solution may be, as some think, or it may not be, as others think, the establishment of subordinate Legislatures. But in the meantime let us, in a common-sense, business-like way, adopt for Scotland a moderate arrangement of our work such as this, which does not interfere in any degree with the interests of the other countries, which will surely, as everyone must admit, materially aid and advance the fulfilment of Scottish legislative work.

Mr. J. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, the right hon. Gentleman had begun his speech by saying that this was a modest proposal. In the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman's own supporters the proposal was far too modest, for some of them had put down Amendments which showed that they did not consider it sufficient to meet the necessities of the case. The right hon. Gentleman had depended on a good deal of false analogy for his argument. He had said, for instance, that the Parish Councils Bill for Scotland could not pass through Committee in the usual way because of the amount of time which had been consumed by the English Parish Councils Bill. But there were over 500 English Members and only 70 Scotch Members; and if 72 Scotch Members could talk as long as 500 English Members there would be very little progress made with the Bill even on the proposed Scotch Committee. The fact was, that if the Bill went through Committee in the House, it would be left almost entirely to Scotch Members, and would not take up much time unless the Scotch Members themselves insisted on spending the time. The arguments brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman might be very good in support of Home Rule, but they were not applicable to the Motion before the House, for when a Bill came back to the House from this proposed Grand Committee English opinion and votes might still have a preponderating influence upon it. He objected to the appointment of the Committee because it involved partial treatment between the two countries. Scotland was to have the proposed advantage, and England was not. The proposal was the more unnecessary because the Committee of Selection were always very wisely careful to place on Committees a full proportion of the Representatives of those parts of the United Kingdom to which particular Bills applied. On many occasions the majority of English and Welsh Members had been outvoted by the majority of the House, and on no more important question than on that of the retention of Churchwardens as trustees of charities when the Parish Councils Bill was under consideration. That Amendment had been rejected by a majority of 47, the numbers being 163 against the Amendment and 116 for it. There were 53 Scotch and Irish Members in the majority, and only 10 Scotch and Irish Members in the minority; so that if the Bill had been before an English Committee that Amendment would have been carried. Another important Amendment, which proposed that the Churchwardens should not be turned out of their trusteeship in charities founded after the passing of the Act, and which was supported by the Opposition, was rejected by 36 votes. In the minority of 207 Members there were 68 Scotchmen and Irishmen, but in the minority of 171 there were only 13. If the Scotch and Irish votes were deducted from each side there remained a majority for the Amendment of 19. In that case also the wishes of England were simply overridden. He wished to quote for the House a very high opinion on the absolute necessity of maintaining equality amongst the Members of the House, and of depriving no section of the House of rights possessed by other sections. The late Prime Minister, in introducing the Home Rule Bill on February 13, 1893, said—

> "The next argument is this, and I own it touches me nearly and cuts deeply into the mind and heart of anyone who has had a long experience of Parliament. It is that unless the Irish Members vote upon all questions you break a great Parliamentary tradition—that of the absolute equality of Members of the House. I cannot say, Sir, what value I, for one, attach to the principle of Parliamentary equality. Be the man young or old, be he rich or poor, be he from the ranks of the highest nobility, or be he a representative of the working classes, be his powers what they may, be his standing here what it may, I hold in defiance, if it so must be, of all merely conventional considerations, that the essential equality of the Members of this House is a principle of the deepest consequence, and forms a part—a fundamental part—of the environment in which we live, and which, to a large extent, enters into and makes us what we are."

The hon. Member for North Aberdeen had laid two propositions before the House—one, that Englishmen knew nothing about Scotland, and the other that Scotchmen knew nothing about England. From the first proposition the hon. Member deduced the argument that when Scotch business was on in the House English Members did not understand it, and took no part in its consideration. But Englishmen, and men of every nationality in the House, were responsible for the good government of Scotland and of every other portion of the United Kingdom; and if English Members knew nothing about the laws and institutions of a country they were supposed to govern, more shame to them! They were bound to learn something about those laws and institutions; and how could they learn it if all Scotch Debates were to take place upstairs? The hon. Member for North Aberdeen also said that Scotch Members did not care whether Londoners were robbed by their Water Companies. If that were so, how did it happen that Scotch Members voted in such large numbers on all Bills affecting London? The hon. Member for North Aberdeen also contended that this proposed Grand Committee would not be a Scotch Committee because there would be 15 Members of other nationalities also on it. But as the Grand Committee would be composed of 72 Scotch Members and only 15 of other nationalities, it might be very fairly said that it would be a Scotch National Committee. He did not believe that the proposed Committee would save time. There would be a desperate discussion on every proposal to commit a Bill to the Committee for consideration, and then if the Bill got to the Committee there would be a minority of Scotch Unionist Members on the Committee suffering under a grievance who would do their best to make their voices heard. The experience of the Church Discipline Act of a few years ago showed how a small body of men with a grievance could render the proceedings of a Committee almost impossible. Then when the Scotch Bill got back from the Committee to the House English Members who felt they had a grievance in being excluded from the Committee when they desired to be instructed on Scotch matters would air their grievance, probably at considerable length, and the progress of the measure through the House would, consequently, be very slow. One of the arguments now being used in favour of an alteration in the other branch of the Legislature was that the veto of the Lords was used only when one political Party was in power. The same argument could be used against this Motion. The Motion could only be put into operation when one political Party was in power. No work could be sent to the proposed Committee except by the consent of the majority of the House, and as the Unionist Party, if in Office, would not send any work to the Committee, the Motion, therefore, could only come into operation when the Liberal Party were in power. Their object should be to draw closer together all the nationalities which made up the

United Kingdom, to remove all inequalities, and to unite their institutions as the nationalities themselves were united in the United Kingdom.

*MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, it had been observed that no English Member had spoken in favour of the Government proposal, and it was for that reason that he had risen to offer a few observations on the matter. It might appear rash in a young Member to interfere in a Debate which concerned the procedure of the House, but, on the other hand, it was possible that some of the ways of the House of Commons were seen more clearly by a new Member than by some of the older Members, who had got used to the habits of the House. Last Session he felt, as many other Members must have felt, over and over again, that it was useless for any Member who came to the House to work, to try to get a measure in which he was interested carried through the House. On one or two great Bills last Session there were limitless speeches and Amendments intended to waste the time of the House. That was not the true function of an Opposition. The Opposition ought rather to amend and improve legislation, than to set up a wall to prevent the country obtaining what it had voted for and determined upon. That seemed to him to be the course which the Opposition should pursue, whether it were Liberal or Conservative. Men of long experience in the House seemed to take the obstruction as a matter of course, and even to acknowledge that they had done it in their time. The Motion before the House was intended and calculated to save the time of the House, and that was his first reason for supporting it. Another argument for the proposal, and a very true argument, was that the business to be relegated to the Scotch Committee was business which a vast number of Members of the House did not understand, and which they were in great measure incompetent to legislate upon. He had observed that whenever a Scotch question was being discussed the House was left almost exclusively to Scotch Members. Whenever Scotch business came up it simply defied the comprehension of Englishmen, and if Scotch business did not concern the constituents of Englishmen, they would do best to leave it to the Scotch Members. In fact, that was practically done now, and the only question was whether Scotch business should be considered upstairs instead of occupying that Chamber to the exclusion of English and Irish business. Practically they had got a Scotch Committee doing Scotch business already, and power to outvote Scotch Members when they touched on Imperial questions, and they had used that power over and over again. Practically, therefore, the only proposal before the House was whether this Scotch Committee should meet in a Committee Room upstairs and allow English and Irish business to be transacted in that Chamber at the same time. He remembered the present Prime Minister some months ago, when he did not hold the exalted office he now filled, saying that the English democracy must not be afraid of experiments in legislation. For that, among other reasons, he was glad that Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister, because it was to be hoped that whilst he directed the Government he would encourage experiments in legislation. Surely, if any experiment might be tried, this very moderate one now under consideration might be. They must get on with the business of the country. A large measure of devolution was proposed last year, and it met with a most extraordinary opposition from a large minority of the Members of the House. Now a very small measure of devolution was before them, and that also appeared to meet with strong opposition. He did not, however, believe it would have met with anything like so strong an opposition if it had not been for the relationship which some hon. Members opposite imagined it bore to the larger measure. Some hon. Members thought that this proposal would be a dangerous Constitutional innovation—he was not sure that it was not a proposal which was going to disintegrate the Empire. The affairs of the town in which he (Mr. Byles) lived were managed by a Municipal Corporation, and all the real business of the town was done in large committees such as was now proposed, and to which reporters were not admitted; only once a month the whole Council met together, and considered what the committees had been thrashing out in detail. That seemed to him an example which they might with advantage follow.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Do you have a separate committee in separate wards?

Mr. BYLES: No. But that was not the argument he was pursuing at the moment. He felt perfectly certain that if the House would take its work in a partially-prepared condition from a Committee it would get through its business a great deal faster than it now did. So far from such an experiment weakening the Empire, it would rather strengthen it. It would develop the national spirit and local patriotism of a nation like Scotland, and for all these reasons, though an English Member, he declared himself a supporter of this Motion.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said, he did not propose to trouble the House with any close reference to the speech of the hon. Member for the Shipley Division. That was a remarkable and fantastic and an illogical attempt to defend the proposal of the Government, and so far as he could follow the remarks of the hon. Gentleman his argument was mainly based on two points. The first point was that the Bradford Corporation conducted some of its business by means of committees, and by those committees the business of the Corporation was expedited, but when he asked the hon. Gentleman across the floor of the House whether those committees were divided according to districts or wards, he was obliged, of course, to answer in the negative, so that, as a matter of fact, the argument of the hon. Gentleman, so far from telling in favour of the proposal of the Government, told in favour of the present practice of the House, which was that the Grand Committees, upon which some of the business of the House was usefully devolved, were really microcosms or miniatures of the whole House. The hon. Gentleman apparently thought that the whole prospect of legislation by Grand Committees in the future depended upon the absence of the Press. That was a very remarkable argument to fall from a gentleman who was believed to be largely connected with the Press, but if the argument did not do great credit to his ingenuity it certainly did credit to his disinterestedness. In the speech of the Secretary for War they might find the very strongest possible reason against this proposal. The right hon. Gentleman was in favour of the proposal, first because of the delay in Scotch business, and secondly because of the want of proper weight given to the opinion of Scotch Members. Whose fault was it that Scotch business had been delayed? Who was it that forced the House to occupy the whole of the legitimate Session of 1893 and the whole of the subsequent Autumn Session with a Bill for Irish Home Rule and the Parish Councils Bill? It was the Government, and no one else. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to realise constantly in the course of his speech that a very awkward comparison might be made between the progress of Scotch business under the late Conservative Government and its snail-like progress under the present Government, and the right hon. Gentleman then tried to show that there was obstruction against the present Government which had not existed in the case of the preceding Government. He thought it was a delightful piece of unconscious humour on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to talk about obstruction on the part of the present Opposition, and to be utterly oblivious to what happened when the present holders of Office were in opposition. Why, the obstruction against the present Government—if it existed at all—was but a drop in the bucket compared with the resistance which the late Government had to endure. Had the Secretary for War forgotten the way in which the Irish Local Government Bill was received by his own friends, and the way in which the Scotch Fisheries Bill was obstructed out of the House? Had the right hon. Gentleman forgotten the obstruction in which the whole Liberal Party freely indulged in against the Irish Crimes Bill; and had he forgotten that long night's sitting, in which the late Government tried to force through the Light Railways Bill, in the interest of the people of Ireland, against the opposition of some of the Irish Nationalist Members, backed by Scotch and English Radicals? The charge of obstruction was idle, and the argument of the right hon. Gentleman recoiled absolutely upon himself. If Scotch business had been delayed it had been entirely delayed by the action of the Government in preferring other business to Scotch. The second argument of the right hon. Gentleman, that insufficient weight was given to the opinion of Scotch Members, simply meant absolute separation and provincial legislation all round. If Scotland was to have a separate Grand Committee, and if the weight of localities was to prevail against the general sense and intelligence of the whole House, why should Grand Committees be denied to Lancashire and Yorkshire, or to the City of London? The theory contained in this proposal was illogical and absurd, and would be absolutely fatal to the idea of an Imperial Parliament. Scotland was represented in the House by 72 Members, one-ninth of the whole representation in Parliament, and Scotland happened to possess about 4,300,000 of a population out of the total population of 38,000,000 of these islands. On the principle, therefore, of "One Man One Vote" Scotland had her full share of voting power in the House of Commons. The truth of the matter was that this proposal was an attempt to get in by a sort of side wind the thin end of the wedge of Home Rule. That was the reason that English Members had a perfect right to intervene in this Debate. This was not a Scotch question, but it was essentially an Imperial question. The Secretary for War argued that it would be no injustice to England to give Scotland this Committee, because England always prevailed, but the fact was that in the present Parliament England had never prevailed. Irish Home Rule was carried by a majority of 34 in this House. It was entirely an Irish, or, at all events, an anti-English majority; while the English majority against Home Rule in the Division was 71. The Parish Councils Bill afforded a still more important illustration of this point. Many of the most important provisions of the Parish Councils Bill were carried against English feeling by Scotch and Irish votes, and, therefore, the statement—the grossly inaccurate statement—of the Secretary for War fell to the ground. The Home Secretary had been giving graphic descriptions of Members trooping from the Smoking Room to out-vote the Scotch and Welsh Members. He ventured to say that was a childish and illogical argument. They could not have a national or Imperial Parliament without this sort of intervention on the part of Members who had not so much interest in the question as some other Members had. A thing of the kind happened every day—Members came in from the Smoking Room and Lobby and Dining Rooms to vote in accordance with the directions of their Party, and in accordance with their own feelings. It happened upon every question that came before the House. Therefore, for the Secretary of State for War to appeal to Scotch national feeling on a ground like this was simply to talk clap-trap. It was perfectly well understood that local or provincial self-interest was not the best judge of important questions which came before the House, and that it was better for the general interest that the whole body of Members of the Imperial Parliament should come in to settle these questions. He would give one or two instances to the House. Take the case of the duties on corn. Everyone must admit that the repeal of the duties on corn had proved to be a desperate blow to the agriculturists of this country. Now, if they were going to allow separate and local interests to decide large questions for themselves, why should a question of this first-class importance have been settled by the town Members, against the desires and wishes of agriculturists? Or to take another case—that of the Rating of Machinery Bill. That was a matter which interested the great towns of this country, and if the towns decided it for themselves, there was not the slightest doubt that the Rating of Machinery Bill would have been carried in this House by an enormous majority. But no one could complain of the action of the agricultural Members, who saw that if the measure were passed further and heavier obligations would be put upon them. The fact was that the proposal of the Government was absolutely illogical and indefensible, and the more it was looked at the more monstrous and paradoxical and ruinous did it appear. This principle of autonomy, or separate legislation, or Home Rule, the thin end of the wedge of which appeared in the proposal before the House, was fatal to every country and nation that had tried it. [*Cries of* "Name!"] Very well, he would name the only two peoples of Europe who had tried the experiment—namely, Austria and Turkey [*A cry of* "America!"] Yes, he would take the case of America, and he would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether 30 years ago America did not carry on the greatest Civil War of modern times in order to destroy this principle of separation? The strength of the United States at the present moment was due to the fact that they had determined to destroy this principle of separation which the proposal now before the House involved. He knew what the hon. Gentleman below the Gangway was thinking of, but there was no comparison between the States Legislature and a Home Rule Parliament. The States Legislatures would be more properly compared to the English County Councils. But to revert to Austria, the reason why that country was the weakest of the Powers of Europe was that she allowed this separate principle to come in; and hon. Members knew that in regard to Turkey the principle was entirely dead. The only powers in the world which had made great progress in modern times were those who had adopted and adhered to the principle of Union—Germany, Italy, and the United States. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] That was a perfectly fair argument as addressed to the general principle of Home Rule. He was sorry, however, to have left the direct issue before the House. He contended that there had been no arguments addressed to the House upon the great Constitutional issue involved in this question. The main Constitutional principle laid down in the formation of Grand Committees was that they should be a miniature of the whole House, and, according to the basis of the Committees, the Government should in the Scotch Committee have a majority of 5 per cent. or 6 per cent.; but according to this proposal they would have a majority of from 100 per cent. to 120 per cent. The most obvious answer to this demand was, why should not the same advantages be given to England? In the second place, the proposal of the Government, as it was offered to the House, involved a gross injustice to the English electors, because it would give predominance in Scotch affairs to the Scotch Radical majority, in Irish affairs to the Irish Home Rule majority, and in Wales to the Welsh Radical majority, while it denied predominance in English affairs to the Conservative and Unionist majority.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said, it was quite obvious that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had argued this question, not upon its merits or the question of its necessity, but on the question of Home Rule, which had absolutely nothing to do with the proposal. If it was undesirable to grant Home Rule for Scotland, which he did not admit, the best course to adopt would be to agree to the Resolution before the House. He was quite certain that if the House had acceded to the very mild and moderate request of Scotch Members for this same Committee a few years ago the demand which was growing so rapidly for Home Rule would not have been so much heard of at this moment. He desired to express his gratitude to the Secretary for Scotland for this present proposal. He thanked him individually, and he might venture to thank him in the name of his constituents and in the name of the people of Scotland. They had had great difficulties for many years, and they now at least had a faint glimmering light of relief. He should have thought the proposal would have been one of relief to the House itself. Scotch Members were often twitted with their dull oratory, and were told that the nature of their subjects had driven hon. Members out of the House. He would have thought that the best relief in those circumstances would be the proposal now before them. What was the proposal? It was to take away from the House the dullest, dryest, and most dreary part of Scotch business—[Sir H. MAXWELL: No, no!"]—to leave all stages except that of Committee unchanged, and to preserve all opportunities to English Members of taking part in Scotch Debates that they now had. Considering the mildness of the proposal, he was bound to say he was surprised at the character of the opposition to it. Hon. Gentlemen were endeavouring to strangle it with ingeniously-constructed imaginative difficulties of the bogey kind they had so often raised during this Parliament. They were passing through the bogey stage of difficulties which depended upon the imaginative power of their originators. It was very difficult to argue with objections of this kind. There was an old saying that they could not argue with a prophet; they could only disagree with him. As the same kind of argument had been used against almost every proposal which the Government had brought forward, it was beginning to pall upon them. How often had they heard that the British Constitution was fatally imperilled; how often had they heard of the terrible results of legislation which falsified the prediction? He would not be standing there to advocate this proposal if he were not quite certain that a good case had been made out in its favour. What he might call the Grand Jury of public opinion had brought in a true bill in favour of something being done to remove the block of obstruction from public business. That part of the country which he represented had long since got impatient at the delay which was taking place in regard to measures which were urgently required. It was entirely on account of the long neglect of Scotch business that the demand for Home Rule was now growing so rapidly North of the Tweed. The Scotch Members were unanimous in holding the necessity for something being done. They had held a meeting upstairs, at which strong and emphatic speeches were made. Perhaps, if those speeches had been reported, the House would not be at all doubtful as to the determination of the Scotch Members. Some of them formed a small Committee to wait upon the Member for Midlothian, who was then Prime Minister. Again, strong and strenuous speeches were made, and they obtained a promise of some proposal of this kind. The Scotch Members were rowing in the same boat up to this point. They were all agreed that something was to be done. But when a definite proposal was brought forward they parted company. Members on the other side opposed this plan, and they had proposed nothing in the way of an alternative plan. One of the great arguments against this proposal was that it was novel. It might be so, but they had already adopted the principle of devolution, and from his own experience he could say that the work of the Grand Committee was done expeditiously and practically. There were no reporters present at the Committees, and, therefore, Members had no temptation to speak to the gallery. Very great inroads had been made upon the old traditions of the House of Commons. The procedure of the House had been entirely revolutionised, and he believed that a great many of the arguments which were used against the present proposal had been used against the establishment of Grand Committees, which in themselves constituted a vital change in the arrangements of the House. Of course, it was quite possible for the elaborate ingenuity of the gentlemen who sat opposite to stifle any proposals with a network of imaginary difficulties, but if hon. Members did not go with the times they would simply become fossilised, and business would be even more hampered in the future than it had been in the past. It was said that England wanted a Grand Committee. It was very suspicious that nothing was ever heard of the English desire for devolution until Scotland happened to ask for it. Why should not England have it if she wanted it? The physical difficulties might be great, and it might be necessary to hold the meetings of the Grand Committee in Westminster Hall, the St. James's Hall, or even the Agricultural Hall. But England's Grand Committee was the House itself. England had for years had in large measure the command of the time of the House. She was there on the spot, whilst the Scotch Members were foreigners and aliens. The Scotch Members came up to Westminster with a mode of procedure, with laws and customs which were entirely different from those which ruled in England, and they were told that they spoke in a language which no Englishman could understand. Surely it would be a good thing to let them go upstairs to a quiet Committee Room, where they could talk over their affairs in perfect comfort and domestic happiness, and thresh out their measures in their own special and local way, so as to return them to the House in a form which could be assimilated and digested by English Members. He could not see how any Party advantage was to be derived from the proposal, inasmuch as there would be ample opportunity for the House to amend what was done by the Grand Committee. The proposal had been received with interest, and he believed that when it was better understood it would be received with enthusiasm, by the people of Scotland.

*MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) thought there were some points on which hon. Members required some further light in reference to the Motion. Was it to be understood that it was put forward as a Sessional Order only? If so, this fact was scarcely consistent with the manner in which it was proposed by the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan), who had said that a Scotch Grand Committee would not be worth "a single Session's purchase" if its Members used it to meddle with the affairs of other parts of the country. Again, the House had not received any definite information upon the point whether the proposal was intended to be put into operation only when a Liberal Government was in power, as was suggested by the hon. Baronet the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Sir C. Cameron). Another point on which they needed information was, whether the Government would stand firm by the Resolution as it was now proposed. Some of their supporters were opposed to an "order of the House" being required before a Bill was sent to the Committee, and others objected to the Bill being sent only after the Second Reading. It would also be desirable that the House should have some definite information as to what was to be done about the other nationalities. The hon. Member for Dumfries Burghs (Mr. R. T. Reid) had said it would be grossly unfair to refuse a similar concession to English and Irish Members if they wanted it. In view of the influence which the hon. Member had with the Government, it would be desirable to know how far the Government concurred in the opinion thus expressed. Another point on which some enlightenment was needed was as to the relation of the proposal to what was known as Home Rule. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Sir C. Cameron) was emphatic in stating that it had nothing to do with Home Rule, but had to admit that he himself had presented a Memorial asking for a measure of the kind, the first words of which were—"Pending the concession of Home Rule to Scotland." The proposal was a very important innovation in the practice of the House. The hon. and learned Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) had said that the proposal was opposed as being a Constitutional change, and had propounded to the House as a conundrum the question, "What is the British Constitution?" The question was not, however, as to the British Constitution, but as to the constitution of Parliament, and, therefore, all the hon. and learned Member's grand theory of the difficulty of defining the British Constitution had nothing whatever to do with the subject before the House.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. T. SHAW, Hawick, &c.): After such a speech as that which has been delivered by the hon. Member for Sheffield (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett), I am anxious that the House should have its attention directed to the very simple and practical character of the issues that are before it. May I, however, in the first place, be permitted to give a very brief answer to one or two questions which have been very properly put by the hon. Member for Glasgow University (Mr. J. A. Campbell)? His principal questions, as I understood them, were three in number. The first was whether this proposal, if approved of by the House, is to be considered as a Sessional Order only. If there is one thing more than any other that has been made plain from the beginning, it appears to me that that has been made plain. This is a Sessional Order, and nothing but a Sessional Order. That is one of the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government put the proposal before the House as a moderate and reasonable proposal, apart altogether from large Constitutional questions or issues. The second question which my hon. Friend asked was, "How is this proposal to be carried out when a Tory Government is in power?" I am glad in a sense that he put that question, because from a National point of view it shows me that he does not think that even though a Tory Government should be in power there would be a Tory majority of Scotch Members. What should be done in such a case? It is a very simple answer to give to say that if this be a Sessional Order the Government for the time being should consider whether, upon the whole, it would be for the benefit of Party Government in this House to remit the measures for that Session to a Scotch Parliamentary Committee. I entirely concur in the view that if a Tory Government were in power, confronted as Tory Governments always have been by a large majority of Liberals in the representation of Scotland, that Tory Government would take very good care indeed not to set up during its *régime* this Sessional Order so as to cover the proceedings of a Scotch Grand Committee. I think, therefore, on that ground alone we are entitled to say that this Sessional Order is not an Order which is confusing in its operation. The third question my hon. Friend put was this : do we or do we not mean to stand by the present shape of this Motion ? My right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan) made that plain beyond dispute. We mean to stand by it in its present shape. Having thus ventured to reply to the questions put by my hon. Friend, I should desire to say that, in our view, there is hardly in this question a pretext for all the vague alarms of Constitutional change which have been referred to in this Debate. The object, and the sole object, of this Motion is the facilitation of business in this House. We wish to see Scottish business transacted and not neglected, and that, and nothing more than that, is the meaning of this Motion. When we consider that there is hardly a Board or a Council in this country which would not appoint such a Committee under similar conditions, in the form of a ward or district committee, the membership of which would be based upon local knowledge which was not available to the general body of members, and whose proceedings would be constantly subject to review by the general body, it appears to me to be entirely out of place for Members of this House, on such a proposal, to make general references to the question of "Home Rule all round," or Home Rule for Scotland. The House will not readily forget that on a simple, modest, and practical proposal of this kind we have been treated by one hon. Member to a review of the political state of Europe, with a disquisition on the American War. Is Parliament so constituted as to be prevented from taking up this very practical attitude by means of this Sessional Order ? If so, why is it so ? I will tell the House frankly why I think it is so. It is because there is something that haunts the minds of gentlemen like the hon. Member for Sheffield ; something that haunts their thoughts by day and their dreams by night; something in the shape of Home Rule. That picture harasses and terrorises them constantly, and in the most modest and moderate proposals they will have it that Home Rule is constantly appearing. It was said by no less an authority than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) that this was an intensely unconstitutional proposal. I rather think that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition holds the same view. Why is it so ? It is not unconstitutional in its form, and the reason they think it unconstitutional is, that they are so gifted with second-sight that they will see in between the lines of this simple proposal something which it is not given to ordinary and plain and simple minds to see. It is because they are gifted with this faculty of second-sight that they are thus alarmed. I have hitherto thought that this second-sight was a gift that was only possessed by the humblest and most superstitious of my countrymen. Apparently, however, that is not the case ; it is a gift which is possessed by the most distinguished of my countrymen, notably the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour). He reads into this Motion that which it does not bear on the face of it ; he understands from this Motion what is not expressed in it or contained in it, and then he makes this complaint to the House—"I see all this ; if you have not this gift of second-sight, so much the worse for you ; I have given you a comprehensive survey of the incomprehensible, and I desire to have your view of my view of what will be represented to be absolutely non-existent." Now, out of this book of fancy it were somewhat difficult to form an ordinary statement of fact, and the task was committed to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bute (Mr. Graham Murray). He translated this book of fancy into a statement of fact. The objection apparently is not that this is to be a National Committee, but that there is to be a preponderance upon it of the national element. The hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Sir E. Clarke) spoke of the composition of Grand Committees according to the ordinary rule. He said they had been founded upon the principle of having upon them men of special experience, special knowledge, and special skill. Why is the composition of a Committee on national lines to be a composition antagonistic to that principle? Says the hon. and learned Member for Bute, "There may be a Grand Committee on an English legal question; why should I be excluded from it?" Well, we do not propose to exclude everyone. If there are English Members who are extremely anxious to do in Committee what in the history of this House they have never done in the open House, we shall be very glad to welcome them to the Scotch Committee, and to have their assistance. That is the reason why we propose these additional 15 Members. There are Scotchmen representing English constituencies, notably the Leader of the Opposition, but I am bound to say that his record in regard to attendance upon Grand Committees is not a very good one, as narrated by my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). I would ask the House again to consider whether this doctrine of nationality is antagonistic to the ordinary doctrine that special experience, skill, and knowledge should go to the composition of the *personnel* of a Grand Committee. Why, is not the whole presumption upon the side of local knowledge in the case of local Representatives? Take the average position in which a Grand Committee should find itself as representing the interests of Scotland. I do not find it better expressed anywhere than it was expressed by the hon. Member for Wigtownshire (Sir H. Maxwell) in this Debate. He said—

> "In Scotland their law was different, the Church was different, the agriculture was in many respects different."

And he added—

> "They were perfectly capable of acting as reasonable men, and settling their own affairs among themselves."

When I have read that I ask myself the question, Why does that hon. Member oppose this Motion?

Sir H. MAXWELL (Wigton): That was a historical parallel.

*Mr. T. SHAW: I hope it was none the less accurate for all that. Mr. Speaker, nationality, on the whole, is a safeguard in regard to knowledge of and experience in local affairs. I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who said that feeling in Scotland was so split up that it was impossible to secure the solid verdict of national Scotch opinion, and who asked what burgh Members and county Members, Highland Members and Lowland Members, had in common. I represent a burgh constituency in the Lowlands, and I can only say that the right hon. Gentleman's argument does not square with any of my experience. There are no subjects put before my constituents in which they take greater interest than those affecting county constituencies in the Highlands, especially the vast Land Question, which is predominant in the Highlands. There is a solidarity of Scotch opinion which would be well represented on this Committee, and it is vain to split it up in the mode attempted by the right hon. Gentleman. Our mode of life in Scotland, our system of local government, our ecclesiastical arrangements, our laws and our jurisprudence, even our tenure of land—all these, I say, without hesitation, are less familiar to the English mind than are the same topics as applied to Ireland. Will English Members bear with me in asking them this? Have English Members any knowledge or intimate acquaintance with this—that every Episcopalian among them who goes North of the Tweed finds *ipso facto* that he is a Dissenter? More than that, if he asks for a Presbyterian he may find that two out of every three Presbyterians are Dissenters also. Then on the question of the tenure of land. Will English Members tell me what the feuing of land is? Are they familiar with such a tenure? Have they gone into the details of it? I tell the House that it is impossible to familiarise the English mind except by one process, and that is the process of making an Englishman stand for a Scotch constituency. If he has not the knowledge when he starts the campaign I will guarantee that before he issues from it he will have had to acquire it. I was astonished to find that there was an argument even drawn from history in this Debate, and there was a reference, far more halting than one is accustomed to from such a quarter, made by the Leader of the Opposition to the Union of 1707. Think of this proposal, think of its simplicity and practical character, and then think that there should have been a reference to that Union. How misguided we should be if such a reference should upset our arrangements as a business Assembly. What was the meaning and intention of the Union of 1707 ? I do not speak of the dynastic influence at the back of it, or of the commercial arrangements which induced it, but I say of that Union the meaning surely was nothing less than this : that the business of the two Parliaments should be conducted in a Joint Assembly, and that whatever happened the business which had been done in each Assembly should be continued to be done in the Joint Assembly. That is the secret of our position. It is this : that you have got a Joint Assembly, but that you have not got the transaction of business. If the Union results in this, that you have a United Parliament, but that the transaction of English business is constantly retarded by the congestion of business as a whole, and the transaction of Scottish business is a fading or an absent quantity, I venture to say that it is we who are most loyal to the Act of 1707 when we say that surely it is in the power of the Joint Assembly to make such arrangements as will enable business to be done for both Kingdoms. And now I will deal in a word only with the practical arguments which were used. The Leader of the Opposition gave a forecast of the practical difficulty. He said that in every case in which the House overrules the decision of the Scottish Grand Committee you will embitter Scottish feeling. Well, the question I have to ask is, looking at the history of the last Parliament, is it not the fact that you had a Scottish Committee, for the reason, of all reasons the best, that Englishmen and Irishmen fled from the scene, and that you had Scottish feeling expressed in the representation of three, four, and five to one upon Scottish questions, and then we were outvoted by an English majority. That is the exact parallel to the case that has been put by the Leader of the Opposition. He thinks that Scottish feeling will be embittered if that result should occur, but that has occurred already. In Scotland we think that there is no escape from the difficulty unless you give larger scope to the national feeling and larger power to the National sentiment. The greatest interest, says the right hon. Gentleman, of Scotland, is the greatness of the House of Commons. That is an admirable sentiment, and young Member of this House as I am, I should be the last to deny its weight. Possibly the greatest interest of Scotland is the greatness of the House of Commons, but wherein does the greatness of the House of Commons consist? Does it consist in the House of Commons holding up its hands in horror at the suggestion that the work of legislation may be faciliated ? Is it afraid of its dignity being hurt when work is to be accomplished and legislative results achieved ? I say that that Party has the most right to appeal to the greatness of the House of Commons which assists in any plan by which the House of Commons may accomplish legislative results. It is not in the proposal here made that we come near Home Rule, but it is in the opposition to the proposal that we come near to the idea of Home Rule. You may either have no legislation, as practically you have at present, or if you prefer it—and we surely all must prefer it —some legislation as proposed under this simple scheme ; but depend upon it if the Party opposite resist the principle as against no legislation of some legislation under this scheme, they are bringing the day nearer when it will not be no legislation or some legislation but Home legislation. This is a moderate scheme—in the view of some far too moderate—under which we attempt to remove the reproach of the neglect of legislative duties. At every stage Parliamentary control remains. There are no Constitutional difficulties here because no question of supremacy emerges. In a word, Her Majesty's Government simply demand that Parliament shall become a more effective Legislative Assembly.

*Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) said, he understood that according to the Rules of this House he was precluded from moving the Amendment which was on the Paper in his name, and, with the indulgence of the House, he would explain the reasons that prompted him in placing it on the Paper. What were the circumstances ? The Scottish people pressed the Government for greater attention to Scottish affairs in this House, and the Government offered this Grand Committee. He was exceedingly sorry that he was unable to concur in the remedy proposed by the Government. He had not put down his Amendment in any hostile spirit, but because he was convinced that the proposed Committee was a great mistake. He felt sure that it would not save time, but waste time. He did not consider it a half-way house to Home Rule; it was for that reason, in fact, that he objected to the Committee. He thought it had no relation to Home Rule, and therefore he objected to such a proposal intervening between Scottish Home Rulers and the realisation of their hopes. The Home Rulers asked for bread and received a stone. However long a Scottish subject might be discussed in the Committee Room upstairs, there would always be a hostile minority to demand its rediscussion in the House. Why should Scotland's business be relegated to a hole-and-corner Committee in a garret upstairs? Either the House was capable of managing Scottish business or it was not. If it was, let the House pass some Scottish legislation; and if it was not, let Scotchmen manage their own affairs in their own way, in their own capital. He had taken every opportunity of keeping the subject before this House and the country, and public opinion had ripened so fast that the country was now quite ready for Scottish Home Rule. Therefore, he called upon the Government to give effect to the verdict of this House, and proceed, if not this Session, at the earliest opportunity, with a measure of Home Rule all round. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh University said that he did not mind English votes overriding Scottish opinion.

*Sir C. PEARSON (Edinburgh and St. Andrews University): No; I said I did not object to English votes overruling Scottish votes, if that was the price Scotchmen paid for sitting in the Imperial Parliament.

Dr. MACGREGOR said, he thought that was a very unpatriotic view; and he was not surprised that that afternoon an hon. Member had introduced a Bill to disfranchise all the Universities. Only the other day the Prime Minister told the Welsh University Commission that a Welsh University was being founded upon democratic principles after the manner of the Scottish Universities. It was a remarkable thing that the Scottish Universities, like the English Universities, all returned Conservative Members. That in itself was a strong reason for their disfranchisement. The unpatriotic opinions of the right hon. Gentleman were only equalled by those of the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigtonshire, who said he had no faith in results that followed from Bannockburn. He seemed not to have realised that on the field of Bannockburn was sealed the great charter of the liberty and independence of Scotsmen.

Sir H. MAXWELL: I never used those words.

Dr. MACGREGOR said, that he did not pretend to quote the exact words, but that was the gist of them. Bannockburn founded the charter of Scottish liberty. If English gold had not bribed the impecunious Scotchmen of the day—he was proud to say, only a very few impecunious Scotchmen—Scotland might have joined England in a federal union, and not in a corporate capacity. As it was, Scotchmen had to press now for some form of local self-government. Some hon. Members seemed to sink their Scottish nationality in favour of English interests. The hon. Member for Peebleshire said that, though he was proud of being a Scotchman, he was prouder of being a citizen of the British Empire. He was sorry to hear that. He himself (Dr. Macgregor) was a Scotchman first, and content to be a citizen of the British Empire second. The hon. Member who said that came from the banks of the Tweed, that classic stream on whose banks dwelt that great Scotsman, who, appealing to the sentiment of humanity generally, asked—

> "Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land"?

His hon. Friends the Members for Dumfries and Caithness used to be considered consistent Home Rulers, but they were now showing the white feather, and he regretted that they who had been for so many years fighting for Home Rule should now turn aside and give way on this question. If he were inclined to become poetic, he might feel constrained to quote another countryman of his, a man who, though he did not dwell on the classic banks of the Tweed, dwelt on the banks and braes of bonny Doon. What did he say?

"Wha would be a traitor knave,
Wha sae base as be a slave,
Let him turn and flee.
By oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free."

He objected to the appointment of this Committee, because he wanted the Government to give effect to the distinctly-expressed verdict of the House a fortnight ago. He sympathised with their difficulties owing to the pressure of business, and he would not for a moment urge them to press on a Bill this Session. But he asked the Government to consider as a practical measure whether concurrent Home Rule or Home Rule all round was not now within the pale of practical politics. He saw no difficulty in carrying it out, and he believed it to be the only and inevitable solution of the problem which was now vexing the House and the country.

*SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): While I find very great difficulty in following the hon. Member for Inverness-shire in the argumentative part of his speech, I think he has given some reasons why we should not proceed with the Motion. If 72 Scotch Members resembling the hon. Member for Inverness all discussed matters of business in the manner in which he has discussed this Motion to-night what a very charming Assembly a Grand Committee will be. I doubt very much whether Scotch business would be at all advanced by such discussion. I had also some little difficulty in following the Solicitor General for Scotland. I must, however, congratulate the Members of the Government upon the accession to their Bench of the hon. and learned Gentleman. But he will forgive me if I say I cannot deal with some of his topics. I cannot follow him into the question of second sight, and I must also suggest to him that if his arguments are true and well-founded we ought not to be dealing with Scotch matters at all in this House. If we do not understand them, why should we be allowed to deal with the Second Reading of Bills which are to be referred to this Committee; why should we deal as a Court of Appeal from the Grand Committee from these Bills upon the Report stage, and why should we give a final assent to them? If the arguments of the Solicitor General are correct, they justify a repeal of the Act of Union of 1707, and Scotland ought to have a Parliament of its own. The Solicitor General told us we know nothing of Scotch law. I sometimes think that is true, but sometimes I find myself associated with my hon. and learned Friend in that great tribunal the Court of Appeal for Scotland as well as for England, and I have never heard him tell the English Court of Appeal that he did not understand English law, and I think he will admit that he has even found English Colleagues who have been able to master and argue Scotch law. He tells us that we are not fitted to legislate upon Scotch affairs. I wonder whether he felt any modesty when dealing with the 13th clause of the Parish Councils Bill. He dealt without flinching with the intricacies affecting charities in England. I confess that the arguments that have been addressed to us appear to me when dealing with the constitution of Parliament to be singularly narrow, and are fitted only for those who say they are Scotchmen first and Imperialists afterwards. This is not a Scotch question. It is a question of the Imperial Parliament, whether it is or is not to continue a united Parliament in its action, and if we admit that we are incapable of performing our duties as legislators in one of the stages of the action of Parliament we admit our inability to govern as a whole this United Kingdom, and we have to ask for a new departure and a greater departure than is represented by this Resolution. I am anxious, however, if I may, to deal with this question from a very practical point of view. I do so because I have fully in my mind what was the object of those Grand Committees which are now sought to be dealt with and adapted to the new state of things. The House will recollect what this Motion is. It is the formation of a Grand Committee under two new conditions. The first is that any Bill that the House chooses to remit to the Grand Committee shall be determined by it in substitution for the action of the Committee of the whole House; and, secondly, that the Committee shall not be a miniature of Parliament and a reflection of this House, but shall be a specially-formed Committee substantially of Scotch Members only. I say if this Motion is acceded to we shall be using these Grand Committees for purposes and under conditions that were never intended, and which cannot be practically realised. There are Members in this House, I presume, who recollect the Debates in November, 1882. I recollect it fell to my lot to assist in a minor degree in the formation of the Resolution upon which the Grand Committees were based when they came into existence. I have nothing to say of any knowledge I possess of the intentions of those who framed those Grand Committees, except to refer to the expression of those intentions in public and in this House. Some will recollect that in the terms of that Resolution the subjects that were to be remitted to these Grand Committees were defined. The object of the definition was that the Bills that should be remitted to these Grand Committees should always be of a non-contentious character. The late Prime Minister expressed himself most distinctly upon that point. I well remember that when we were proposing to remit to the Grand Committee on Law the Criminal Code Procedure Bill, which was entirely a matter of well-defined law, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington pointed out that that Bill contained some matters comparatively of general interest, such as the laws of high treason and sedition and the laws affecting the Press; and the Prime Minister declared his intention to be so distinct that nothing should go before the Grand Committee which should approach a contentious or Party question, that he promised the noble Lord and this House that after the Grand Committee had passed that Bill, with all the provisions contained in it, it should, in respect of the questions referred to by the noble Lord, be recommited, and that the whole House should deal with them, because they were possibly of a contentious or Party character. In that spirit the House accepted the proposal for a Grand Committee, and it was also determined that such Committee should be a reflection of the House. Therefore, in this Motion we have two great departures from the real object of Grand Committees. It was never intended that these Committees should act in substitution of the performance of duties by the House in Committee, or that any question which is of a partisan or contentious character should be sent to a Grand Committee. It is said that the House is master of the situation, and the House need not remit business of a contentious character unless it should see fit, but if this Motion is carried you may be forced to remit every Bill from this House, whatever its character, to a Grand Committee. What is your object? It is apparently stated that the only object is to transact more quickly the business of this House. Yet the more contentious the Bill is greater will be the business you transact by keeping it in this House. Who is to determine these matters? It has been said by the Solicitor General for Scotland and by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow that a Bill is never to be remitted to the Grand Committee unless a Liberal Government is in Office. The Solicitor General says it will be for a Tory Government to consider whether it would be in the interests of Party Government that they should make a similar order. Consequently these remittances to a Grand Committee are never as a rule to be made when a Conservative Government is in Office, but they are to be made if a Liberal Government is in power. And this is called the preservation of the symmetry of Parliamentary procedure. Who will control this matter? Will it be within the wisdom of the Liberal Government? They have now some 49 supporters from Scotland, and they say they will have more. That may or may not be the case. Supposing, now, the Scotch determination of character is developed only to an equal extent with that developed in the Welsh Members, and these 49 Scotch Members say to the Government, "We intend to have this Bill remitted to the Grand Committee, because we shall have superior advantages if we are a Grand Committee compared with what we should have in the General House." What will the Government say? Why, Sir, these Members will be masters of the situation. The House is asked to delegate this power which is to supersede the whole power of the Committee of the House of Commons to the Liberal Members from Scotland, who can not only make their terms with the Government, but can impose their terms upon them. We are asked to give up the important duty of developing good legislation in Committee to the will of the Scotch Members, who will control the Government. Is that a Scotch question? I would remind the House that while the late Prime Minister was controlling the action of the Government this Motion was never brought forward, and I will tell you why. In the course of the Debates of 1882 a Motion precisely similar to this was brought forward, except that a national Standing Committee was claimed on the part of the Irish Members instead of on the part of the Scotch Members. The Prime Minister dealt with the demand, and in the first place he said the proposition was an enormous constitutional innovation. How is it spoken of now by those on the Treasury Bench? As soon as the right hon. Member for Midlothian ceases to be Leader of the House this Motion is brought forward. It was never mooted on the part of the Government while he controlled the Councils of the Government. He adhered to his contention that the proposition would be an enormous Constitutional innovation, and he never allowed one of his lieutenants to come to this House and make a frittering speech as if he was bringing forward a bye-law in a vestry. The right hon. Gentleman was prophetic on that occasion. He did not speak for the mere hour. He admitted that if the proposition was accepted it might receive development, but he added in respect of this similar proposition for Ireland—

> "I greatly doubt if Parliament will ever sanction anything of this kind."

It is singular that, while he entertained these views, it was not until he quitted the Government that this Motion was brought forward, and we are now asked to sanction that which the great Leader of the Liberal Party always doubted would ever be sanctioned by the Parliament of which he was so long the leading figure. I should have thought that the experience of my right hon. Friend would have told him what great danger there is in sending Party and contentious measures to the decision of Grand Committees. We have been told that in Grand Committees there is great facility of business. So there is, as long as you send non-contentious measures to them. So long as Party feeling is not roused and the contention of Parties is not displayed you have great facility for a rapid disposal of business, but when you have Party questions involving the principles of political life do you think there will be the same facility of action in the Grand Committees? If there be not, how will you check the strife of Party action? You can check it in this House, but you will never control it by the small power vested in the Chairman of a Grand Committee. I recollect that when the Bill to which I have alluded, and in respect to which the late Prime Minister made the promise I have mentioned, was referred to a Grand Committee, it was thought that a Bill for amending the procedure of the Criminal Law would not have developed many contentious aspects. But it did. There were, among other questions, those of high treason and sedition and the law relating to public meetings, which aroused the opposition of the Irish Members. That was a sufficient difficulty for any Attorney General to cope with, but it so happened that the Irish Members received some assistance, from the Constitutional view, from the late Lord Chancellor of England, the late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, as well as from a gentleman whom many Members of the House will recollect, I mean Mr. Wharton. What was the result? We sat during the greater portion of a month, and the progress we made was that out of 126 clauses we never got beyond the third discussed clause, and we had to abandon the Bill. Even in the case of the Church Discipline Act, with regard to which both of the great Parties in the State were a greed, there was a band of opponents who paralyzed the power of that Grand Committee, until with a somewhat rough-and-ready despotism, which cannot be applied further without the sanction of this House, they were told they could not debate the matter, and were refused audience of that Grand Committee. To this new Scotch body, without adequate power of control and closure, we are expected to send for consideration such questions as that of the Disestablishment of the Scotch Church. This is an innovation of a most dangerous kind. The Secretary of State for War has told us that if Ireland asks for similar treatment, Ireland ought to have it. Therefore, if

Ireland asks for a separate Committee she is to have it, if Committee Room No. 15 or any other room is available. The Irish Members are to have the power of dealing in Grand Committee with legislation that will affect Ulster on the one hand and the rest of Ireland on the other, and we are to stand by and yet claim that we represent an Imperial Parliament. It seems, from the utterances of the Secretary for War, that this is a stepping-stone to the greater goal of Home Rule. When I listened to the right hon. Member I recalled these words of his—

> "Every move that we make is a move in favour of Home Rule."

Is this a move in favour of Home Rule? If not, on what other principle can you justify it? I expected that to-night we should have heard one other Member in this Debate. When the Government is in trouble and sickly with disease there is one great physician who is called in and stands by the bedside of those who suffer. I mean the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). He spoke upon this question when the Motion was that Scotch business should be considered by a Committee that should be a miniature Parliament reflecting the House of Commons as a whole. To that proposal he said he agreed, but he added that he would give no support to a scheme under which Scotch measures would be remitted to Scotchmen only, on the ground that such a plan would be injurious to Parliament and would create differences between the two nations. The present would be a most fit opportunity for the hon. Member to show his great devotion to the Party whom he has always been so anxious to succour in times of difficulty. I feel that there is no one who takes an interest in the great traditions of this House, and the manner it performs its duties, who will not deplore the fatal step that we shall take if we assent to this most insidious and destructive Motion.

*SIR C. PEARSON (Edinburgh and St. Andrews University) said, he thought it fitting that, after the powerful speech to which they had just listened, some one on the Treasury Bench should, at all events, have made some attempt to reply to the arguments they had heard. He would, at that hour of the evening, be very brief; but he desired to call the attention of the House once more to the singular position in which this Debate stood. He was not aware whether the right hon. Gentleman who introduced this subject to their notice had been surprised that the Debate had extended as it had done, considerably beyond the narrow limits which he fixed upon it, and had risen, at all events on one side of the House, a great deal above the somewhat low level at which the right hon. Gentleman left it. It was introduced by the Secretary for Scotland as a practical and business-like proposal, and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had added one more epithet, and called it a modest proposal. The new Solicitor General for Scotland—whom they were glad to listen to—added another, and said it was a proposal of extreme simplicity. From all these propositions the Opposition dissented, on the grounds which had been laid before the House, and which had not been adequately answered in any of the speeches from the Government side. Taking it even on the narrower ground on which it was originally put, this proposal was recommended to the House by the Secretary for Scotland, as being a mere development of the procedure in the House of Commons on the old lines. If these old lines meant the existing Standing Committees of the House, he ventured to agree with his hon. and learned Friend near him, when he said that the Standing Committees of the House had not yet passed beyond the stage of experiment. They were not an experiment that had met with universal approbation, and this proposal of the Secretary for Scotland was an experiment upon an experiment, and one the success of which, even if carried, would be in the highest degree problematical. But asserting, as the right hon. Gentleman did, that this was a proposal on the old lines, he set himself to prove that it was so, and how did he do it? He presented to the House a portrait of this Committee as it existed in his imagination, and asked the House to admire its likeness to the Standing Committee they knew. He was reminded by the right hon. Gentleman's description of the portrait of Gibbon, which they knew from Gibbon's auto-biography was an excellent picture, endowed with every merit except likeness to the original. The resemblances which the right hon. Gentleman drew between his proposal and the Standing Committee were superficial, almost pedantic. The differences were vital. What were the main resemblances which the right hon. Gentleman pointed out between one proposal and the other? The one which he put in the forefront was that the number was to be about the same. Another was that the quorum was to be about the same—20; another that the Chairman was to be appointed in the same way—that was from the Panel of Chairmen, and the other was positively that the added number of 15 was the same number as that provided for by the Standing Order. Why was it that the right hon. Gentleman put in the forefront the fact that the numbers of their proposed Standing Committee were the same, or about the same, as those which were fixed in the Standing Order? Did he mean to say when that Standing Order was passed it had any conscious reference to the number of the Scottish representation, or that when the Scottish representation was fixed it had any reference forward to the number fixed for the Standing Committee? If neither of these propositions was well founded, what was the relevancy of telling them that there was an important resemblance between the existing and the proposed Standing Committee? The Standing Order said that the number of the Standing Committee was to be between 60 and 80, and it happened that the number of Scotch Members was between 60 and 80; but the connection was purely accidental. With regard to the number of added Members, it had already been pointed out that this proposal was distinctly the opposite of that of the Standing Order. The right hon. Gentleman said he was appointing the Scotch Members as a whole because they had special qualifications for carrying on Scotch business. The Standing Order contemplated not that the bulk of the Standing Committee should be specially adapted to deal with the subject, but that 15 Members should be added on account of their special qualifications. In the present case the special qualification applied to the mass of the Committee, and 15 Members were to be added in consequence of the pedantic desire of the right hon. Gentleman to bring his case under the existing Standing Order. Some of the Colleagues of the Secretary for Scotland were of opinion that the Committee would be better without 15 Members. One hon. Member had likened them to watch-dogs who were to look after the Scotch Members. But the Government had missed the only possible justification for the addition of 15 Members, and that was that they might be added to enable the Scotch Members to avail themselves of the services of those Scotchmen who sat for English constituencies—Manchester, Ipswich, Gateshead, and other constituencies were represented by Scotchmen who would be welcomed on the Committee. It was obvious that the reason why that explanation was not open to the Government was that it would cut away their argument, which was founded on the fitness of Scotch Members as such to do the business of Scotland. Wide ground had been taken by the Secretary for Scotland, but not wide enough, in introducing this subject. He said the purpose was to relieve the House of Commons, and give more time to the business of the House. But before the House gave more time for its business it usually was disposed to know what the Government desired to do with that time. The Secretary for War said that the Resolution carried in favour of Home Rule for Scotland had nothing to do with this Resolution; that the proposed Committee had nothing to do with what was carried on Tuesdays and Fridays by private Members. He should have been willing to leave the matter there had not another Member of the Government, the Secretary for Scotland, declared that in this Committee they would have a special body to facilitate the transaction of special business, and that if a Resolution was carried on the Tuesday or the Friday time would be given to the Government to pass a Bill and carry that Resolution into effect. That meant that the Government might use the time saved by the Standing Committee to pass a Home Rule Bill for Scotland. There were other measures mentioned which had been skilfully avoided by the Secretary for War. The right hon. Gentleman had been asked whether he would refer to this Standing Committee a measure to disestablish and disendow the Church of Scotland. He should be astonished if any gentleman were to assent to that proposition, because to disestablish and disendow the Church of Scotland would be to go very near to the root of the Union with Scotland.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I said "No Bill involving high Constitutional principles would be referred to the Committee," and that surely includes that Bill.

*SIR C. PEARSON said, that the Bill he mentioned was not expressly referred to by the right hon. Gentleman. However, the main ground for the Motion was that it would save the time of the House. As a matter of fact, the passing of the Resolution would create an additional stage, because the question would first arise whether measures were to be referred to the Committee; and as that question would be always debated at length, he ventured to say that the Resolution, instead of saving time, would be apt to have the contrary tendency. What did the right hon. Gentleman say as to giving a similar Committee to England? He said that in principle he was prepared to do so, but that practically the cases were different. Why were they different? The right hon. Gentleman gave as a reason that English Members were always in a majority in every Standing Committee. But the majority the right hon. Gentleman spoke of was not the majority they had in their minds. The majority the right hon. Gentleman spoke of was based on the assumption that the English Members were all on one side, and the other nationalities on the other side. But the majority they spoke of was the effective majority of the Committee—in other words, the majority obtainable upon a vote; and that majority was not always secured by English Members on every question submitted to a Committee. He was astonished that the Secretary for War should have put forward such an argument. No Members on the opposite side of the House had risen to say that they were prepared to appoint a corresponding Committee for Ireland. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow was the first to put forward to the House the whole truth of the proposal, and he had done so with what might be termed an almost cynical frankness. The hon. Baronet maintained that the question of Home Rule for Scotland in any form had no relation at all to the proposal now under discussion. But the question they wanted to know was whether a bargain had been made by the Government in relation to this proposal on the one hand and the Home Rule scheme on the other? The hon. Baronet had described himself as the medium acting between the Prime Minister and the Scotch Members on the question of the concession of Home Rule for Scotland. What he wanted was an explanation of the little bit of private history to which they were treated by the right hon. Baronet with reference to the interview he had with the late Prime Minister. Was there or was there not a bargain with the Government with respect to this proposal, on the one hand, and Scottish Home Rule on the other? The Resolution which was presented to the late Prime Minister ran thus:—

> "Pending the concession of Home Rule to Scotland, we consider it hopeless to look for any Scottish business being done, and therefore we demand this Committee."

SIR C. CAMERON was understood to say he was not correctly reported.

*SIR C. PEARSON asked whether that was or was not the condition of the acceptance by the Government of this Resolution? If that were so, then the consistency of the Government in voting for Home Rule for Scotland last Tuesday was amply justified, but it was at the expense of their political reputation. The hon. Baronet had made clear for the first time that the proposal which was now made was absolutely impossible under a Unionist Government; and the corollary of that was that an English Grand Committee was the natural course of a Unionist Government in English matters. He was glad that that point had been made clear. It had been urged that an English Grand Committee could be appointed to attend to purely English matters, if it had not been for the great number of English Members, which would make such a scheme practically unworkable. He had never believed in the force of that argument, and he submitted still that no difficulty could arise on that ground, for if a Committee were really desirable for England it could be appointed on exactly the same principles as the one proposed under the present Standing Orders. The frank confession of the hon. Gentleman also ended the supposition that this proposal was not a partisan measure. He had no doubt himself that it would turn out to be the most purely Party move that could well be devised by any Government. At any rate, it was admittedly a proposal that would be workable under a Liberal Government but unworkable under any other.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I rise to follow the right hon. Gentleman with some little hesitation. The last three speakers, two of them Members of the Opposition and one a Member of the Home Rule Party, have spoken against the Resolution; but the Government, following the tactics which they have adopted throughout upon this matter, prefer to ignore those speeches and to allow the judgment of the House of Commons to go by default, knowing perfectly well that they can count upon the votes of their supporters. I think that is an unsatisfactory feature of the Debate; but the point which has struck me more than anything else has been either the incapacity, or it may be the unwillingness, of the Government to understand the importance of their own proposal and of the consequence which must necessarily follow its adoption. We complain of the speech in which this proposal was introduced by the Secretary for Scotland. It would have been a very creditable performance if we had been discussing some slight change in the constitution of the Kitchen Committee; but it was absolutely inadequate in reference to a matter such as that upon which we are expected to decide to-night. I am sorry to say that we have equally to complain of the speech of the Secretary for War. He also, like every Member who has hitherto spoken from that Bench or on this side of the House, has endeavoured to minimise the proposal until it has become almost infinitesimal. Well, Sir, if it be such an infinitesimal proposal I would ask, in the first instance, why are the Government so infatuated at this time of the Session, when they have so much business before them, to waste two or three days of the time and probably embarrass themselves in the future on a proposal which is, as they say, of not the slightest importance? The Secretary for War speaks of this matter in a humble tone of voice as a mere trifling proceeding for ameliorating the procedure of the House, for slightly accelerating the progress of Scottish business. That is the light in which he regards it. I have the fear of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Aberdeen before my eyes. In the earlier part of the evening the hon. Member stated that, all the assertions of his opponents to the contrary, all the assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition and of those who had followed him as to this being a most important question were—I do not mind using his exact language, graceful and Parliamentary as we shall all admit it to be—were balderdash. In spite of the terror I have of my hon. and learned Friend, I am going to repeat the assertion, and I am going to try to prove it. I say that this proposal is one which alters the immemorial precedent of the House of Commons, which threatens a thorough change in our Constitutional procedure, and which tends to promote friction in the relations between the two countries. Let us see. I say, in the first place, that it is a reversal of the immemorial precedents of Parliament; and what is the answer of my hon. and learned Friend and of the Secretary for War? They say, "Not a bit of it. There are precedents in our history for the appointment of National Committees." That is not the point. The point is that there is no precedent for the appointment of a Legislative Committee which is out of harmony with the political opinion of the whole House. It does not matter a bit whether the Committee consists of Scotchmen, Irishmen, or Englishmen with regard to this point, providing that the constitution of the Committee is a representation of the state of political Parties in the House. That is the point. Here you are going to make a Committee which, by the necessity of its composition, misrepresents the political constitution of the House, and which enormously, to the advantage of one Party, creates a Special Committee. That is our point, and it is not met by the precedents offered by the Secretary for War or by my hon. and learned Friend. I do not say that this involves, though it makes possible, a vast change in the Constitution, unwritten as it is, which has hitherto controlled our Parliamentary procedure. What is one of the distinctive features of our Parliamentary government? It is the responsibility of Ministers for the legislation which they introduce. That is the great distinction between our Parliamentary procedure and the Parliamentary procedure of the United States of America, and if this proposal is carried out logically and completely the effect will be that the Ministry of the day will lose control of the legislation, so far at least as some of the Committees are concerned, and, having lost control of legislation, you can no longer establish or maintain a Ministerial responsibility. The result of this petty proposal, of this trifling suggestion of the Government, which they appear to think could be disposed of almost without debate in the course of five minutes' consideration, will be that as part of our Constitutional system the Government shall be an Executive and nothing more than an Executive. Then, Sir, in the next place, this may affect the relation between the two countries. You cannot set up Parliamentary Institutions in two divisions of the United Kingdom, whether those Parliamentary Institutions concern only a Committee or whether they concern the whole procedure of the House, without increasing the friction between the two bodies; and you cannot set them up on a small scale without going further. This is only the preliminary to much more important and much more serious proposals. We are told it is not Home Rule. The Government repudiate the idea. They would like to carry it in five minutes as a petty proposal for slightly accelerating Scotch business. No, it is not a proposal for Home Rule, but it leads directly to Home Rule. It is a preparation for Home Rule. This is to be a school for young Home Rulers, a dress rehearsal of a performance which is to be given a short time later for the benefit or for the injury of all the divisions of the United Kingdom, and it is in this light that we must regard it. Is it not a curious comment upon the whole matter that the Minister who brings forward this proposal on a Monday is the very Minister delegated by the Government to express their views the very next night on the question of Home Rule for Scotland. And how did he represent their views? He said that the Government had decided to treat it as an open question. That would be all very well if the Government voted on different sides, although it would be extraordinary if the Government left a matter of this kind, which concerns the integrity of the United Kingdom, as an open question. An open question! Yes, but that very Minister proceeds to vote for the Motion, and to carry into the Lobby with him all his followers. I cannot help saying that the selection of the Minister who was to carry out this performance, who was to ride two horses in the political circus at the same time, and to ride them both badly, was a very curious one. It is singular that the Government chose for this purpose that one of their colleagues who is known to all of us as the one who in this House, in eloquent accents, declared that the confession that the Liberal Party was the Home Rule Party was one which he would resist until his faculties had been strained to the uttermost, and until he had exhausted every Constitutional method outside and inside the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman had changed his mind, as he has a perfect right to do. But surely the selection which was made of him by his colleagues to make this new declaration was, under the circumstances, rather remarkable. The Secretary for War says this proposal is a modest one. Modesty is a virtue which shows itself sometimes—[*Nationalist interruptions*]—never on those Benches; but it shows itself sometimes by concealment; and if that be the point of view from which we are to regard it, I am inclined to agree that this Motion is one of the most modest ever presented to the House. But why is it a modest proposal? It is a modest proposal because it is intended solely to save the time, in the first place, of Scotch Members, and then of the House. The Secretary of State for War spoke of obstruction and of the forces in this House which make for delay. I observed that he looked to the Front Bench opposite as if those forces were concealed somewhere under that seat, but why did he not turn round and look at his own supporters behind him? Are there no forces here that make for delay? I am not speaking of the Opposition, with which I am associated. Although I do not sit on the Front Bench, I perfectly recognise that my right hon. Friend would be entitled to include me in his denunciation of the Front Bench opposite; but why did he not include his followers behind him? I might quote dozens of Bills which were delayed in the last Parliament. Has the right hon. Gentleman forgotten the Local Government Bill for England, when the late Government, with a majority double the majority of the present Government, was forced to abandon an important principle and part of that measure owing to the obstruction of the followers of the right hon. Gentleman? Has he forgotten the Local Government Bill for Ireland which was supported by a similar majority, and which, if we had been willing to adopt the processes which have been readily followed by the present Government, might have been rammed down the throats of the then Opposition, but which, under the system which then prevailed, was defeated and dropped, entirely owing to the obstruction of the right hon. Gentleman and his followers? Has he forgotten the policy of his Party at that time, which was truly put by the hon. Member for Northampton in these words—"Not a shilling of money, not a line of legislation?" Now, Sir, I do not defend it; but if our policy be as obstructive as the right hon. Gentleman alleges, I say it is perfectly monstrous, it is a piece of Pecksniffian hypocrisy, to denounce us for obstruction when the right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that he and his followers obstructed in the last Parliament to the very best of their ability, and that in the next Parliament they intend to do the same. I say, as far as I am concerned, I am quite ready to join in any kind of communication between Parties which will put an end to obstruction whether on one side or the other; but as long as the engine exists, and as long as it is used by the one Party, you may be quite certain the other Party will use it also. However, in the present instance, all we have to consider is whether this obstruction, this engine of opposition, can be controlled and met by such a proposal as that now before the House. We are told that there is to be a saving of time. Will the proposal of the Government accelerate Scotch business? That is the first question I have to ask the House. I will tell the House what I think it will do—it will shorten the lives of Scotch Members. Let us consider what it means. This Committee, if it is to meet at all, must meet twice a week. It will meet at 12 o'clock and will sit till the meeting of the House. On Fridays we already have Morning Sittings. On Wednesday we meet at 12 o'clock. Therefore, on four days of the week the Scotch Member will have to dispose of his private correspondence and private business and be down in the House by 12 o'clock, and on three days of the week he will have to sit for 12 hours a day, and that upon the supposition that the Scotch Member is willing to be excluded from other Grand Committees and also of Select Committees of the House. I should very much regret it. I know perfectly well that Scotch Members do their fair share of the work of the House, and do it very well, and I think the business of the House would be worse conducted for the absence of the Scotch Members. But let us suppose that they are patriotic enough, as the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow claimed for them the other night, to sacrifice their health and to sit for 12 hours a day, and to give up all place in the ordinary business of the House of Commons. Surely, as Scotchmen, they are shrewd enough to refuse to make such a sacrifice unless they get a corresponding advantage, and I think they will not get a corresponding advantage. I defy the Government to prove that this Resolution—which, remember, is proposed for a temporary purpose, as a Sessional Order, to deal with a particular Bill during the present Session—will save any time whatever. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury has gone through his experience on Grand Committees. I happened to have the conduct of a very complicated Bill in the first Grand Committee appointed. That was a purely commercial Bill. It raised absolutely no Party or controversial question, no contentious question in the ordinary sense of the word. Yet it was a pretty difficult business to get that complicated Bill through that Committee. We had something like 2,000 Amendments, if I remember aright, and we occupied between 20 and 30 days sitting on the Committee. But, inasmuch as it was a thoroughly non-contentious Bill, it only occupied a few hours upon the Report stage, and everybody felt that they had been fairly heard, and no doubt great advantage resulted from the labour that we had bestowed upon the measure upstairs. But can you imagine anything of the kind taking place under this proposal? Take the case of the Employers' Liability Bill which we had before us last year. Does the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department believe that much time was saved by sending that measure before a Grand Committee? That was not a contentious Bill in the ordinary sense; it was not one which divided Parties upon its principle, although it was extremely controversial in its details; and yet that Bill when it came back to this House occupied double the time on its Report stage that it would have done had the right hon. Gentleman been content to allow it to pass through the Committee and the Report stage in the ordinary way. There we have an instance of a Bill taking a long time to pass through the Grand Committee, and then having to be discussed at great length again in the House of Commons. If that was the case with an ordinary Bill, *à fortiori* will it be the case with regard to Bills which go before a Grand Committee of this kind. If you can produce upon the minds of the minority the impression that they have been treated fairly and that any question, however contentious, had been thoroughly threshed out and has been decided by the ordinary Rules of the House, the general feeling of all parties interested will be against any undue prolongation of the Debate. But here you are going to create a Special Committee with a special Party majority in which the minority will lose the ordinary chances which they would have in the House, and the result will be that the minority will be justified in believing it to be their duty to their constituents on a matter which they believe to have been insufficiently discussed, to endeavour to reverse the unfair decisions of the Committee, and to insist upon having the matter fully discussed and fairly decided in the House of Commons itself. In such circumstances what time will you save by sending such Bill before your new Grand Committee? Of course, if the only Bills you intend to send before the Committee are of the character of a Bankruptcy Bill my objection will fall to the ground. But you say that you intend to send before it such Bills as the Parish Councils Bill, which you say is of a non-contentious character as to its principle. But the English Parish Councils Bill, though non-contentious in its principle, was eminently controversial in its details, and it would have been perfectly hopeless to have expected to get it through without any lengthened discussion both in Committee and in this House. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland has said, in answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, that he does not think that there will be any time to send Private Bills before the Grand Committee. I can see why the Government were not anxious to put up a Cabinet Minister to speak upon this proposal, because it is perfectly true it never happens in debate that two Cabinet Ministers get up without contradicting each other. What does the Secretary for Scotland say? He puts this forward as one of the great advantages of the proposal. He turns to the private Members who sit below the Gangway, and says that there is a new heaven and a new earth for them, and that if they will bring forward Private Bills they will be sent before the Grand Committee, with the result that probably the Government will take them up. My hon. Friends must be content with disappointment; I do not suppose that now it will even strain their loyalty. It is evident that this ridiculous Scotch Committee is put forward merely to deal with the Parish Councils Bill, and with nothing else during this Session; but even in reference to that it will not save the time of either Scotch Members or of the House. The Secretary for War says that—

> "After all, our chief object is that Scotch opinion shall receive its due influence, which it has not hitherto received; we want to make the opinion of Scotland, as manifested by the majority of its Representatives, more influential than it is at present."

It appears to me that my right hon. Friend is in some confusion. Let me put this question. What is the case in which Scottish opinion, as represented by the majority of Scotch Members, does no secure its due influence? Clearly it is the case in which the majority of the House is opposed to the majority of Scotch Members. What is the use of bringing in this proposal now? Wait till the majority of the House is in opposition to the majority of Scotch Members

Remember you are not committing the House for the future. This is a Sessional Order; this applies only to the time when it is not of the least use or importance. By the confession, the deliberate admission, of the Government themselves, this is to secure the influence of the majority of Scotch Representatives only when the majority of Scotch Representatives are in entire accord with the majority of the House and with the Government. But when the majority of Scotch Members are out of harmony with the majority of the House, what is to happen then? Suppose that in the course of two or three years, which the Secretary for War allows to the present Government, the Unionist Party come into power, then it is possible, if the representation of Scotland is not changed—I am taking a very strong hypothesis—then it is possible that if the majority remain as now, the majority of the whole House will be opposed to the majority of Scotch Members. What is to happen? The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow says, "For Heaven's sake do not let us have a Scotch Committee then; we do not want one." Therefore, the proposal of the Government is reduced to this—that when a Scotch Committee could be of the slightest importance to secure the object in view, then you are not to have one; but when it is a matter of supererogation, why we are to waste four days of valuable time in order to give it. This seems to be ridiculous; but it is not the crowning absurdity of the proposal. That is that this system of devolution of public business is to apply only to those portions of the United Kingdom where the Government have a local majority. That was the position of the hon. Member for the College Division, who, if not the author, is the champion of this proposal. He said, "When the Unionists come in let them have a Committee for England; when the Home Rulers are in they must have a Committee for Scotland." See what that means—with the Government at present in power, you may have a Committee for Scotland and perhaps we may have a Committee for Wales and another for Ireland later on. With the present Government, or successors of the same opinions, you may have three Committees; but when the Unionist Party is in power you may have a Committee for England and perhaps one for London. That is not a Party proposal we are told, and, in a sense, that is true. It is perfectly clear that if this machinery is forged for the advantage of the Party in power to-day, they will not have any right to complain if the Party which succeeds operates with the same machinery. The effect of this device is this—that in each case, as one Party succeeds the other, each in turn by this means will be able to increase artificially and abnormally its local majority. This is a cumbrous and, I venture to think, an unworkable device for packing your Committees; and I do not think the House of Commons ought to adopt it without full consideration and discussion. The Secretary for War, I am bound to admit, does not seem to adopt in its entirety the proposal of the hon. Member for the College Division; but if the proposal as explained by the Secretary for War is a little less absurd, it is a great deal more unfair and one-sided, because what is the proposal of the Government? It appears to be this—that you shall have a Scotch Committee to-day, but that there shall be no reciprocity, and when the Unionist Party come in of course they will not have a Scotch Committee, and neither are they expected to have an English nor a London Committee. No attention is, apparently, to be paid to English opinion, not because English people do not want it, but because—and I should think this was suggested as a joke—there is no room large enough for them to meet in. It is seriously proposed by the Government that this system of national Grand Committees is to be specially instituted and maintained when it is of advantage to Home Rulers, and when it is not so it is to be dropped with the magnanimity which I am glad to see they always show. If we are to consider this Motion as a proposal for Scotch Home Rule limited, then I say that it possesses all the worst features of the Irish Home Rule Bill. What was the worst feature of the Home Rule Bill? What was the feature which no English Member has ever dared to advocate? It was the suggestion that Irish Members should deal with their own domestic affairs unfettered by English interference, but should, at the same time, come to Westminster to meddle with our affairs. That indefensible proposition appears on this Motion. In the discussion on the notorious 9th clause of the Home Rule Bill an Amendment was put down that a contingent of English Members should be sent to Dublin. I do not think that was ever discussed. I believe it was gagged with many other propositions. I fancy it was put down rather as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle embodied in the Bill, rather than as a serious proposition. But the proposal, which must have seemed absurd, is actually adopted by the Government in regard to the Scotch Grand Committee, for a contingent of Members, whose sole qualification is that they are not Scotchmen, are to be sent to take part in this Committee, and to leaven what otherwise would be, I suppose, too Scotch. Was ever a proposal so futile and so irritating introduced into a proposition? Are the 15 English Members to act as watch dogs, or are they to be note-takers to report the proceedings of the Scotch Committee, and if anything dangerous to the British Government takes place, at once to announce it to the Government? If this is considered to be a safeguard, it is a ridiculous one. The position of the 15 English Members would not be at all enviable. The Secretary for Scotland and the Secretary for War complained that the English Members do not attend to Scotch business in the House, and so, I suppose, as a punishment, 15 of them are to be sent to attend nothing but Scotch Debates, and Scotch Debates conducted under peculiar circumstances, for the Secretary for Scotland said that one of his objects was to bring out Scotchmen who have hitherto been silent. The principle here proposed is exactly the same as that in Clause 9 of the Irish Home Rule Bill. The Government are perfectly consistent. They always allow the predominant partner to go to the wall. We have heard a great deal said in eloquent terms about national sentiment. Do you think that we English have no national sentiment? National sentiment with the Government is, however, only to be respected when it serves a Party purpose. The disadvantage of a course of this kind is perfectly clear, and, as far as we are concerned, it is perfectly impossible for us to argue it upon the narrow basis upon which the Government have sought to put it. I do not say the subject is not worthy of serious consideration. When it was proposed by Mr. Bright, as a substitute for Home Rule, I thought it ought, if it were accepted by the Irish Members, who were at that time the Representatives of the Irish National Party, to receive very serious consideration, in order to see whether, as a compromise to Home Rule, we could possibly accept it. But that is not the position in which it is placed before us now. It is now only proposed as a means of obtaining a slight Party advantage during the present Session. But that is so. If the Government had accepted the principle on the ground that it was a principle that was right in itself and should be applied to all nationalities alike, I should not feel justified in making that charge, but they propose to apply it only where it serves their present purposes. I say we refuse to consider it on that narrow ground, and that we are bound to consider it as a proposition which, sooner or later, must be applied to all nationalities equally. Scotch Members almost entirely have dealt with the arguments against this proposal; and they have been so curiously filled with a sense of their own grievances that they have been totally unable to appreciate the possibility that any other nationality in the United Kingdom is similarly situated to themselves. What do they complain of? They complain of a congestion of business. Is not English business congested? It is not a new thing. It has been so ever since I have been in the House of Commons. It has been the complaint of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian that purely English business has been congested, and that necessary English reforms have been unnecessarily delayed. British legislation has been postponed again and again, and British legislation has very often been postponed —very often, let me say, by the direct action of other nationalities in the United Kingdom. Does anyone want an instance? I would point to the Bills introduced again and again for the benefit of the agricultural labourer by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley. Yes, that is a most excellent illustration. I pass over the great Public Bills which have been delayed or which have not been brought forward owing to stress of time. But hon. Members who advocate this system of Scotch Committees have referred to their own grievances in regard to Private Bills. I say the right hon. Member for Bordesley brought in Bills one to secure compensation to the allotment holder if he were disturbed, and another to secure technical education to the agricultural labourer. They were not Party Bills, or Bills to which any philanthropic man could have taken the slightest objection. They were supported and backed by Members of the Conservative Party, of course by Members of the Liberal Unionist Party, and of the Gladstonian Party; and I will say, to their honour, that the Members of the Gladstonian Party were, some of them, more energetic in support of the Bills than any others. But these Bills never got a hearing. And why? Because they were blocked by the Irish Members opposite. I do not want to exaggerate the grievance. It is part of the system under which we work. But when the Secretary for War and the hon. Member for Aberdeen complain of their grievances, I say that our grievances are much greater. I say we have found that our national sentiment has been overriden again and again by the votes of other nationalities, and if we do not complain now it is only because we subordinate our interests to the greater interests of the whole country; but if this system of Separatist legislation is to obtain, you may take it for granted that our voice will be heard also. I must deal with an extraordinary argument used by the Secretary for War. He says, "You have no grievance, you English, because you are a majority in the House." What on earth has that to do with the question? The point of the Scotch grievance is not that they are a minority in this House, but that their majority, representing a majority of Scotch opinion, is overruled by our majority. But our grievance is exactly the same. Our majority is overruled by their majority; and for the life of me I cannot see what difference it makes whether that is a majority counted on a total representation of 400 or 500 Members, or whether it is a majority counted on 60 or 70 Members. In either case the argument is the same. That majority represents the national sentiment, say the Scotch Members. If it does so, it equally represents the national sentiment in England. If Scotch sentiment is overruled by the Imperial majority at Westminster, similarly English sentiment is equally overruled by the same majority when it happens to be against England. Now, I have said we can only contemplate this matter on fair grounds. If the Government would come forward and propose it as a universal scheme, then we should have to consider it, and what should we have to say? Is it possible, let us ask ourselves, as the question may arise later, to apply this system universally, and to deal with all our legislation by Grand Committees of nationalities—Grand Committees, remember, which are the beginning but will not be the end? because if you start with Grand Committees, and they give satisfaction to those for whom they are instituted, the demand will instantly arise with greater force for First Reading, Second Reading, and even Third Reading by the same Committee. Let me ask the House to consider one practical result of any scheme which would establish national Grand Committees for all the nationalities. It would lead to the splitting of every national Bill. There are a great number of Bills which are brought in for the whole of the United Kingdom. But even in regard to those Bills there are often differences of detail in the several divisions of the United Kingdom, and if this system were once set up there would be a claim which you could not resist to have each Bill split into separate Bills, in order that each nationality might have a separate opportunity of deciding upon it. I will take the case of the Employers' Liability Bill. There was a Bill which was very fairly brought in for the whole of the United Kingdom, and if this system of Grand Committees were adopted I do not hesitate to say that England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, every one of them having very different opinions on some of the details of the Bill, would have insisted that separate Bills should be brought in for each nationality, and you would have had four Bills to pass instead of one. Look at that one question of contracting out. Does Wales agree with the decision of the House of Lords? Possibly you would have had to have a separate Committee for South Wales, because in South Wales, at any rate, owing to the existence of the Miners' Federation, there is a very considerable opinion in favour of contracting out. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] It is perfectly ridiculous to deny it. You have got a great Federation which has enrolled more than 60,000 electors. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I do not care for these details. I maintain my assertion, and I say without hesitation that if there had been a Grand Committee for South Wales, the decision upon the contracting-out clause would have been different from what it was in the whole House. In England, at any rate, the majority was undoubtedly in favour of the contracting-out clause, and it was only rejected by the aid of Scotch, Welsh, and Irish votes. I do not want to labour the point, because it is not one of very great importance; but, undoubtedly, if you establish four national Grand Committees you would have a great number of Bills split up which are now carried as a single measure, and the result would be a great waste of time. Let us now consider what is more important. The Secretary for War says that if they are still in power next year, and the Irish Party demand an Irish Committee, he for his part should see no objection to granting it. Is it certain that in an Irish Committee formed to-day the Government would be in a majority? The Government, no doubt, have the support of the majority of Irish Members as their ordinary supporters, but do they agree with the majority of Irish Members upon the details of Irish legislation? I would ask the Chief Secretary: Would he like to submit to such an Irish Committee a Bill dealing with the Magistracy of Ireland, or a Bill dealing with the amnesty of Irish prisoners, or a Bill dealing with the details of Irish land? I need not wait for his answer. I am perfectly certain that my right hon. Friend and the Government of which he is a Member would be unable to support the conclusions at which such an Irish Committee would in all probability arrive. Then take the case of Wales. I admit that is a stronger case. The Government have on their side a great majority of the Welsh Members; but, in regard to Wales, is it certain that the views of the Government, say, with regard to the disposal of Church Revenue, or the question of tithe, or the relations between landlord and tenant, would accord with the views of a Welsh Committee, or that they would have a majority of the Committee? That is the case with respect to the present Government. They would be in a minority in an English Committee, where they would not be able to carry a single Bill; they might be in a minority in an English, Irish, or Welsh Committee, and they would only be in a majority, with any certainty, in a Scotch Committee. If I took the case of the Unionist Party I should find the positions reversed; we might be in a majority where the Government would be in a minority, and the Government might be in a majority where we were in a minority. What is the result? One of two things must result from the adoption of this proposal. Either, as I have already said, the Government will have to make a tremendous Constitutional change, abandon Ministerial responsibility for legislation, and say that they would take the legislation provided by their followers, whatever it might be and whether they agree with it or not, instead of taking the usual course of resigning Office in case of disagreement. They must, I say, either take up that position, which is an entire revolution of our present Parliamentary system, or they would have upon Report to reverse every one of the obnoxious decisions to which such a Committee might have arrived. Suppose they did that, is it pretended that such a state of things would lead to harmony between the different divisions of the United Kingdom? Is it not certain that it would enormously increase the friction which may at present prevail? I venture to sum up what I have said in a few brief sentences. I say, in the first place, that there would absolutely be no saving of time, if the proposition of the Government is adopted pure and simple, without any of its endless consequences; that is to say, that this being a proposal for a Scotch Grand Committee on the Scotch Parish Councils Bill, I really believe that, without any obstruction in the ordinary sense of the word, no saving of time will result from the adoption of this proposal. In the second place, if the proposal is confined to Scotland or to those countries where the Government have a majority, it will be grossly unfair to England and ought to be resisted by every English Member. In the third place, I say that, if universally applied, which is the other alternative, it would upset our whole system of Parliamentary Government. In these circumstances, I submit that the advantages of this proposal are very problematical, whilst the difficulties in the way are very great indeed. It is much more than the modest proposal that the Secretary for War declares it to be, and, for my part, I regret very much that it should have been introduced this Session for what, I cannot but think, is a temporary Party purpose. I cannot see, at all events, that it is going to serve any public purpose, and I can only look upon it either as a deliberate attempt to increase the local majority in a Scotch Committee, or as a concession wrung from the Government as a sop to their extreme supporters, whom they are unable to gratify with a measure of Home Rule. But although this is not Home Rule, it is still a very dangerous proposal—dangerous at any rate in the eyes of those who have any regard for the integrity of the United Kingdom. To us it is a serious proposal, because, if it be not Home Rule, it is playing with separation. It is directly calculated to inflame the jealousies between the different nationalities and to increase the difficulties which already exist. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laugh. I think they do not see the gravity of the situation, or that they are not afraid—which is another position to take up—of the ultimate conclusion to which it may take them. Nothing is easier than to stimulate divisions of opinion between different sections and provinces of the United Kingdom; nothing is easier, and nothing is less statesmanlike. What is the experience of everyone who knows anything of local government in this country? We know that when you have established side by side Local Authorities with separate institutions, although those authorities may be doing the same work and may have substantially the same interests, there arise immediately the most intense petty jealousies, which often operate very greatly to the disadvantage of the community. Anyone who knows the history of litigation in our Courts knows what an enormous amount of time and what enormous sums of money have been wasted in these struggles between people who have been stimulated into opposition simply by the fact that they have different and separate local governments, and that they have considered that they had pride and prestige to maintain. That is a necessary consequence of local government, but surely it is not wise to introduce this difficulty into a sphere where it will be much more serious and dangerous. It is said that this is a question of nationality, but I think it is rather a mistake to talk of this as if it were only a question of nationality, because nationality is, after all, an arbitrary and artificial distinction. Nationality is a question of history, a question of time, and very often you find that there are much greater differences between people of the same nationality than between people of different nationalities. But this I say, that if to-morrow you desire to re-create, and do re-create, the heptarchy in the United Kingdom, although the inhabitants of the separate Kingdoms would be very near indeed in character and race and position to their neighbours, still, within a few years of the creation of these separate Kingdoms you would have them as jealous as possible one of the other and perfectly ready to enter into something like an internecine war. I think that policy is dangerous, because it promotes differences of that description. Up to the present time England, at any rate, cannot be described as having been jealous of the other nationalities of the United Kingdom. ["Oh, oh!" *from the Nationalist Benches.*] I notice the 'union of hearts. I say that up to the present time, at any rate, it cannot be alleged that England is jealous of the other nationalities which go to make up the rest of the United Kingdom. I have no doubt that the English people see with regret, and perhaps with disappointment, their legislation moulded not in accordance with their own preferences, but in accordance with the preferences of Members from Ireland, from Scotland, and from Wales. But we have been always willing to make that sacrifice in the interests of national unity and strength, and I do not pretend that the sacrifice is very great, because there is a public opinion of Scotland, and Ireland, and Wales, and there is a public opinion of the United Kingdom, which is something greater and, I think, nobler than the public opinion of any single part of the Kingdom; and to that public opinion, that higher public opinion, we are perfectly willing to subordinate the details of our legislation, provided that the other nationalities will be also willing to do the same. But if they insist on standing alone, if they will not yield anything of the opinion of the part to the opinion of the whole, I say the time is coming when England will also say that she will no longer be bound by all these other nationalities. Hitherto these questions of separate interests——["Divide!"] I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, whether these interruptions are worthy of a moment's notice. The Government have deliberately chosen to treat this matter as a matter of no importance, but the Opposition to a man are convinced—and I think we have endeavoured to argue it in a spirit worthy of the occasion—we have shown that we consider it a matter of vital importance, touching, we believe, the very springs of the integrity of the country, and we are to have these ill-bred interruptions from the Members from these foreign nationalities. Sir, I say that hitherto the interests of the different sections of the United Kingdom have been treated in this House with a certain feeling of mutual consideration, and it is natural that that should be so, because, after all, when you talk of separate nationalities, our nationalities are so interwoven and so intermixed by marriage, by settlement, and by immigration, that it would be very difficult for any of us to be certain whether we are pure Scotchmen, or pure Irishmen, or pure Englishmen. Why, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian once told us that the population of Ireland was chiefly composed of the descendants of Englishmen and Scotchmen. I say, under these circumstances, it is absurd to separate the interests of the different parts of the United Kingdom; and not only so in defiance of science and the introduction of railways, which have brought us closely together. I think it is most unwise—I think it is most unpatriotic—to seek to undo by legislative proposals what natural causes have to a large extent effected. I do not know whether most of those who hear me were present when the Member for Aberdeen made his speech. I wish they were here, and that they heard one expression which I thought most significant. He spoke of "the foreign incubus of English influence." I did not expect to find a Scotchman talk of Englishmen as foreigners. Why, in England at this day we have thousands and tens of thousands of Scotchmen, Welshmen, and Irishmen, and we are content to treat them as our fellow-subjects, content to see them influence our public life, content to see them take part in public work, and carry off, as they deserve by their ability, a large portion of the prizes that we have to offer. But now, forsooth! a different spirit is to prevail. We are to substitute for that feeling, Scotland for the Scotch, Ireland for the Irish, and England for the English. Well, Sir, when we are all foreigners one to the other, who do you think will be the greatest loser? I believe that this proposal is unwise. I believe that in its consequences it will bring about great evils which will be felt by all parts of the United Kingdom—by "the predominant partner" as well as by the smaller partner—and I am convinced that its effects, disastrous as I believe they will be to all concerned, will be most injurious to the smaller nationalities in whose interest it is professedly brought forward.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 252; Noes 219.—(Division List, No. 26.)

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I presume that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not now have any objection to the adjournment of the Debate, especially as during the last half-hour it has become apparent that the House is scarcely in the mood to listen to further argument to-night. I therefore beg to move the adjournment of the Debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Goschen.*)

Sir W. HARCOURT: Of course, if hon. Gentlemen opposite are resolved not to go on with this discussion it would be idle to pursue it into the early hours of the morning. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the House being rather impatient. But I have always observed that when a speaker, however able he may be, promises to conclude in a few brief sentences, and then goes on for half an hour——[*Cheers, which drowned the close of the sentence.*] We had reason to believe that after a day and a-half's debate on this Motion, this being the third day, we might have concluded it to-night. But, if that is not the case, our arrangements must be altered, and we shall put this Motion down for Friday morning instead of the Uganda Debate.

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Friday, at Two of the clock.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

LORDS AMENDMENTS.

*Sir C. RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): Those Members who have taken an interest in this Bill will know that it has passed the Third Reading in the House of Lords. They will also know that during its passage through this House certain Amendments were foreshadowed and suggested by hon. Members. Those Amendments were inserted in the House of Lords. They are of the character I have described, and I would ask the House to allow them to be considered now.

Lords Amendments considered forthwith, and agreed to.

MOTION.

EDUCATION CODE, 1894.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, he wished to move that an Address be presented to Her Majesty praying for the amendment of the New Education Code of 1894 in a number of the Articles.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham) said, he hoped the hon. Baronet would not think him discourteous for interrupting him, but he had understood from the hon. Baronet and his friends that this discussion would be taken on Thursday.

Sir R. TEMPLE said, there was no such understanding on his part. He desired to move the Amendment standing in his name, but not to prejudice any Motion that might be taken on Thursday. The time during which the Code could be amended was now short, Thursday being the last day, and that was his excuse for troubling the House at this late hour. However, he would not occupy the time of the House for more than a few seconds. The object of the Amendments was to protect the poorer voluntary schools against some of the provisions of the Education Code calculated to affect them most injuriously. With regard to some of the items in the Code to which he took exception, he had received a sheaf of correspondence from anxious voluntary school managers who were trembling for the safety of their most meritorious schools. He could assure the Minister for Education that these items were regarded with the gravest apprehension by the school managers. The first Amendment he proposed was as to the definition of the word "department" in reference to parts of a scheme. It was not of much importance, therefore he would pass it over, and the same might be said in regard to his second Amendment. The third Amendment dealt with a part of the Code which restricted the employment of pupil teachers. He was well aware that a large portion of educational opinion on the Liberal side of the House was adverse to the employment of pupil teachers, and also, he grieved to say, his friends of the National Union of Elementary Teachers were anxious that employment should go to members of their body, and that the employment of pupil teachers should be restricted. The use of pupil teachers was good for the teaching profession, as it brought recruits, but a most important consideration was the saving of expense effected by it. The employment of these pupil teachers was sufficient for educational efficiency on the one hand, but on the other hand it produced a great saving—a circumstance which was of importance even to the great Board schools, but still more so as to the small voluntary schools, which were struggling very often with financial difficulties. The next Amendment was of paramount importance. It proposed to leave out the additions which were proposed in the New Code in respect of the proportion of scholars to teachers. If the proportions were altered as proposed the effect would be most injurious to voluntary schools——

Mr. ACLAND said, he had laid an amended Minute on the Table on that subject.

Sir R. TEMPLE said, the school managers declare that if the Code was unaltered in this respect it would play havoc in their schools, as it would impose on them liability for increased establishments which they were not able to bear. This was a matter of vital importance. The managers already had more than they could do to sustain the establishments, and if their liabilities were augmented and aggravated their financial position would become desperate. He did entreat the Government to consider this, and to allow the Code to remain unaltered. It had worked well as it was, both for the Board schools and the voluntary schools. The voluntary schools were admitted to be in an improving condition. They were doing their best under adverse circumstances, and why put on them this fresh liability which filled them with apprehension and inspired some of them with dismay? The next Amendment was not of importance. He proposed to strike out that part of the Code which said that needlework should not be a class subject for girls. That was hard on the girls, and in voluntary schools would increase the difficulties under which the managers laboured. As a Board school man his withers were unwrung, but he was speaking for his poorer neighbours. The next Amendment had reference to the sanitation of schools. They had no objection to schools being closed if there was danger of infectious or epidemic disease, but the Code went farther than that, and would enable any two managers who were able to get a doctor to agree with them to call on the managing body at large to close the school because they apprehended or believed that insanitary conditions existed which would impair the health of the schools. Such a far-reaching power should not be given. The next Amendment had reference to repairing school premises, and dealt with a part of the Code which would prove burdensome to school managers; and the last dealt with the Article of the Code which said that "a Swedish or other drill" should be given in the schools. No doubt, a School Board such as that of London would comply with such a provision, because they had the means and money——

MR. ACLAND said, the Code went on to say "or suitable physical exercise."

SIR R. TEMPLE said, he knew that that was so, but what they contended was that the Code went beyond "suitable physical exercise" and specified "Swedish or other drill," which might be the means of making requisitions on voluntary schools which they were not able to meet. In conclusion, he assured the right hon. Gentleman opposite that these Amendments were of a strictly practical character, and that every one of them had been considered by him with the best authorities in the country regarding voluntary schools. He trusted that they would receive the kind consideration of the House, and that they would meet in some degree with the concurrence of the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her to direct that the New Education Code of 1894 be amended in the following particulars:—

Page 1, Art. 3 (a), leave out 'For the purposes of this Code the Department have power to decide whether a part of a School is or is not a Department.'

Page 3, Art. 12 (e), leave out 'A meeting of two hours or more must include an interval for recreation of not less than 10 minutes.'

Page 9, Art. 52, line 1, after 'first,' insert 'or second.'

Page 15, Art. 85 (a) N.B., leave out 'is,' and insert 'has been,' in last paragraph.

Page 15, Art. 85 (b), leave out '(which after 31st August, 1896, must not be needlework).'

Page 16, Art. 88, leave out 'or any danger to health likely to arise from the condition of the school.'

Page 20, Art. 101 (b), (1), leave out 'Swedish or other drill or.' "—(*Sir R. Temple.*)

MR. ACLAND said, that in regard to this new Education Code, he had endeavoured to meet the convenience of the House. He had arranged for this Debate to come on on Thursday next, which would have been within the limit of time allowed for the Minute to lie upon the Table, and he certainly had thought that the hon. Baronet the Member for Kingston had acceded to that. If, therefore, the House was detained on the present occasion it was not his fault. The first and second Amendments the hon. Member had not laid stress upon; therefore it was not necessary to deal with them. With regard to the next one, he (Mr. Acland) had gone into it carefully, and the practice which was in existence when he came into Office was continued in the Code. The next point was one in connection with which a Minute would be laid on the Table to-morrow morning, and perhaps he had better say nothing about it until the

Minute was in the hands of hon. Members. As to needlework being a class subject, the point was one upon which he had had no complaints from the bulk of teachers and managers. It was understood now that girls might take one class subject besides needlework, just as boys took one class subject besides drawing. In the main, that was accepted as a right and sensible proposal. On the next point the hon. Baronet had hardly understood the Code, because the words about "danger to health" had reference to the sanitary committee of the district—which was a body quite outside—who might, in the case of an epidemic or condition of things dangerous to health, require the school to be closed. He did not think the Code was likely to lead to the Sanitary Authority increasing their power. The next point was one that a noble Lord opposite was interested in, and, in accordance with the understanding which had been arrived at, he would defer making any observation upon it until Thursday. The last point was as to "Swedish or other drill or other physical exercise." These general words had been put in, not with the idea of forcing a particular kind of drill in any school. He believed hon. Members opposite would agree with him that it was desirable to encourage in all their schools a certain amount of reasonable physical training between the lessons, in the playground if the school possessed a playground, and if not, in the school itself. The words complained of by the hon. Baronet were simply alternative to the additional words "or suitable physical exercise."

*Sir F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, he had given most careful and anxious consideration to the different details of the Code, and having heard explanations from the Department was prepared to accept the proposals of the Government.

Question put, and negatived.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL. (No. 148.)

Read a second time, and committed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.—(No. 149.)

Read a second time, and committed.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL—(No. 150.)

Read a second time, and committed.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.) LAW, &c.

Sir John Mowbray reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure:—Mr. Samuel Hoare and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Boulnois and Mr. Billson.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Behring Sea Award Bill, with Amendments.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.—(No. 97.)

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 134.)

SECOND READING.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [11th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

MOTIONS.

COMMONS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider every Report made by the Board of Agriculture, certifying the expediency of any Provisional Order for the enclosure or regulation of a Common, and presented to the House during the last or present Sessions, before a Bill be brought in for the confirmation of such Order.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power in respect of each such Provisional Order, to inquire and Report to the House whether the same should be confirmed by Parliament; and, if so, whether with or without modification, and, in the event of their being of opinion that the same should not be confirmed, except subject to modifications, to report such modifications accordingly with a view to such Provisional Order remitted to the Board of Agriculture.

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Twelve Members, Seven to be nominated by the House, and Five by the Committee of Selection.

Dr. Ambrose, Viscount Curzon, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Thomas Robinson, and Mr. Taylor were accordingly nominated Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. H. Gardner.*)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Barrow-in-Furness, Buxton, Chipping Wycombe, Chesterfield, St. Helens, and West Hartlepool, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burt and Mr. Mundella.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 163.]

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Grimsby, Harrow, Leyton, Monmouth, Peterborough, and St. Austell, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burt and Mr. Mundella.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 164.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 5) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the urban sanitary district of Athlone, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley, and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 165.]

UNIVERSITIES REPRESENTATION ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Roundell, Bill to abolish the representation in Parliament of the Universities of the United Kingdom, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Charles Roundell, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Mac Neill, Mr. Roby, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Gully, Mr. Francis Stevenson, and Mr. Paul.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 166.]

HOUSE OF LORDS VETO (ABOLITION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. E. J. C. Morton, Bill to abolish the power of the House of Lords to Veto Legislation passed by the House of Commons, ordered to be brought in by Mr. E. J. C. Morton, Mr. Arch, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. T. D. Sullivan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 167.]

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Spicer, Bill to enable Women to be elected and to act as County Councillors, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Spicer, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Walter M'Laren, Mr. Macdonald, and Sir Stafford Northcote.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 168.]

MUSSEL SCALPS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Birkmyre, Bill to provide for the acquisition and better regulation of Mussel Scalps in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Birkmyre, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Wason, Mr. Harry Smith, and Mr. Crombie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 169.]

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Field, Bill to amend the Public Libraries (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Field, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Clancy, Mr. William Johnston, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Mr. Carson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 170.]

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dalziel, Bill to amend "The Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir Charles Cameron, and Mr. Renshaw.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 171.]

POOR LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lambert, Bill to exempt certain persons from the liability of maintaining relations who become chargeable to the public funds, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lambert, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Billson, and Mr. Luttrell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 172.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolutions [16th April] reported—[See page 553.]

Resolutions agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mellor, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

DISPENSARY COMMITTEES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Bill to amend the Law relating to the qualification of Members of Dispensary Committees in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. Crean, Mr. Bodkin, Mr. Tully, and Mr. M'Cartan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 173.]

And, it being after one of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 18th April 1894.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL BILL.

(No. 8.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) rose to move the Second Reading of this Bill. He should not, he said, make a long speech, because he did not think there was a single Member of the House who had not made up his mind how he should vote on the question. Not only was that the case, but the last General Election was, to a great extent, fought on the policy embodied in the Act he now asked the House to repeal. There was one large party in England and a very large party in Ireland whe were for a policy of conciliation towards Ireland. Another powerful party in England, and a comparatively small party in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, wished to govern Ireland by brute force, for as long as the Act which he sought to have repealed—and which was commonly known as the Coercion Act—was in force the people of Ireland would consider they were being governed by brute force. The party that triumphed at the polls was the party of conciliation. One great point of the English Constitution was individual liberty for a man to go about his private affairs and individual liberty to take any political action he chose. When a man in England was tried for any offence he had certain guarantees that he would get a fair trial. The Judges were among the very best of the lawyers, and were practically irremovable. But, good as these Judges were, they were not the sole guardians of the people's liberty, for there was a jury of 12 men empanelled to try an offender, and they were drawn from the very district in which the offence was alleged to have been committed. This had been found a great guarantee of liberty. Further than this, it was only one of the highest of the High Courts of Justice that could step in and change the venue. In Ireland the Act which he asked the House to repeal took every one of these guarantees away. Ireland was not a free country, and whilst the Queen was a Constitutional Sovereign in three-fourths of the United Kingdom, in the remaining one-fourth she was an un-Constitutional Sovereign. How did affairs stand in Ireland? They had had Members of Parliament and others who addressed public meetings on political questions prosecuted for offences under the Coercion Act. If a man was accused of a disgraceful crime he did not boast of it in his constituency. He did not wish it referred to; but in Ireland if a man had been convicted under this Act it became a subject of boast and congratulation. ["Hear, hear!"] He was glad to hear that cheer from the hon. Member for Carlisle opposite, who once apologised for him (Colonel Nolan)—and that before an English audience, too—because he had not been imprisoned in Ireland. Offences committed under the Act were not considered crimes either in England or in Ireland. How were these offences tried? By removeables—by gentlemen who were appointed to the Bench at salaries of £700 a year because of some claim, public or private, upon a Minister, it might be in regard to a battle in South Africa. These gentlemen did not know much about law. Of course, they could work up enough law to meet their ordinary and proper requirements, but they were absolutely unfit to try the Constitutional questions that were brought before them under this Act. It was, therefore, absurd to send Members of Parliament to be tried before such men. It was inviting a miscarriage of justice. The great thing was that such men were removeable, and that they were liable to lose their £700 a year. £700 a year was not a large salary, but it might be a great deal to them and to their wives and children, and they knew that if they stuck to their own opinion under the Coercion Act as against that of the Attorney General and the Law Officers they were in danger of losing their appointments. They might be, therefore, not so obstinate as to stick to their opinions and lose £700 a year. He objected to a Star Chamber system of inquiry in Ireland, which was utterly unknown in England. The last time it was attempted in England it materially assisted in bringing about a revolution. They were told that it took place in Scotland, but he contended it would be very much out of place in England as it was in Ireland. The Irish law was founded on the English law—or as much as they were allowed to have of it. It was not founded on the Scotch law, and he believed if it was attempted to establish it in England Members would rise in revolt against it and destroy the Government. Why, then, should it be allowed in Ireland? He also complained that the Attorney General had too much power in Ireland in regard to change of venue. In England a motion had to be made in Court, but in Ireland the Attorney General had only to write his name upon a paper when he wished to make changes, and it was done. As a rule, the Attorney General was a gentleman who was on the look out for a Judgeship. He was appointed for his political services, and if he did not take a Judgeship it was because it was not good enough; and this was the gentleman who was entrusted with this important power. The Coercion Act was an infamous Act when they came to look into it. If it had been inflicted upon England the people of Ireland might have submitted to it; but it had not, and he contended that it was atrocious to impose it upon those who were too weak to fight against it. There had been nothing like it since ancient times. Coming down to a late period, they found that the United States once suspended the Constitution in the South, but only after a tremendous war. The Constitution was restored after a short period, and the men from Alabama were now as good citizens of the United States as the men of New York. Lord Salisbury had an idea of repealing this Act at the end of 20 years, but that period did not count when the Liberal Party were in Office, but only when the Conservatives were in power. It had been imposed upon Ireland because it was a weak country and unable to resist it. He thanked the present Government for not having used the measure, although they had a great temptation to do so, and believed that by refraining to put it into force they had done a great deal of good. Had Ireland ever been as quiet during the last 20 years as it now was? The present Government had administered Ireland now for two years without the Coercion Act, and there had been extremely little crime in that country. No class had suffered. That was one reason for supporting a Liberal Government. They called themselves a free people, but directly a Conservative Government came into power the Coercion Act would be again enforced. The question was one that required very little discussion. He believed every Member had made up his mind now to vote on it. He, therefore, left it to the decision of the House. He knew that a large portion of the House were opposed to its provisions, and he trusted that the year would not go by without having this horrible and wicked Act removed from the Statute Book.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.), in seconding the Motion, said, everyone knew what this Coercion Act was. It was a measure that had not been applied to England, to Scotland, to Wales, or to any other part of the British Empire except Ireland. To expect that the Irish people would have an Act of such a character imposed upon them under such circumstances was to expect too much. He must say that, while he quite agreed with his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) that the present Government deserved a certain amount of credit for not having put the Coercion Act in force, the Irish Members had every reason to expect that the Government would have proceeded to repeal the Act long before now. They all knew that when the Chief Secretary and his friends were in Opposition they denounced both in England and Ireland the Coercion Act, and he did not think he would be going too far if he said that the return of the present Government was largely due to the fact that they had pledged themselves to repeal that Act, and to govern Ireland with the ordinary law. The right hon. Gentleman would not find fault with them now for being anxious that it should be repealed. He did not think the Chief Secretary would put the Act in force again, because it would be quite contrary to all his professions upon the subject, but they all knew that it was not an impossible contingency that he might at some time or other cease to be Chief Secretary. They were aware that under certain circumstances another Government might come into power, and that then, without a single day's notice, all the terrible machinery of the Act of 1887 could be put into force by the new Government without reference to this House at all. That was a very dangerous state of affairs, and the Irish Members could not be blamed if they asked for the repeal of the Act in order that it might not in future be used—at all events not without full discussion in that House, and after the matter had been thoroughly ventilated. The Chief Secretary might tell him that the Government had been very well employed since it came into Office, and that really there had been very little or no time for taking the action they were now asked to take. He granted that last year the Government occupied most of the time of the House in endeavouring to pass a Home Rule Bill. For that they deserved credit, but he was only expressing the opinion which he believed existed among the Irish people, when he said that there was a great deal of disappointment existing that the Government had not taken some step in the direction to which he was now referring. The Government had been nearly two years in power, and they had made progress with various English Bills of an important character, but they had given no sign with regard to this Coercion Act. If they had stated that they would take the earliest opportunity of repealing it that would have been something, but they had said not one single word to that effect, and under those circumstances his hon. and gallant Friend was justified in bring forward his Motion. There was no matter of higher importance to the Irish people than to secure the repeal of this Act, because if in the future they should find it necessary—as was not impossible—to enter into a combination once more for protection of their property and themselves against landlords, as they had so successfully done in the past, they would be confronted with this Coercion Act, and hampered thereby in every possible way. He contended that the Government ought to assist them in repealing this Act. They would then be able to say that they had been sincere when they were denouncing Coercion. He would not go into details with regard to this proposal. He would only say it was a measure which, if the Irish people had a means of settling is for themselves, would not have been brought before that House. He did not believe the Coercion Act could have existed in any other country in the world. As an Irishman, he felt absolutely humiliated to think that they had to come to that House to make such an appeal to it. It was almost like begging to ask that they might have restored to them the commonest principles that had prevailed in every portion of the British Empire. It was humiliating to Irishmen in this, the 19th century, to have to ask Englishmen and Scotchmen to repeal an enactment which could not exist in any other part of the world. In 1887 the Coercion Act was passed by the aid of the Closure of the most drastic kind, and on the Second Reading the most tremendous fraud of the century was perpetrated. Forgery was actually brought into it in order to influence the House in passing the Bill. He did not hesitate to say that some Members were influenced into voting for the Second Reading in consequence of the publication in *The Times* of the letter which led them to believe that Mr. Parnell and his associates were in correspondence and in connection with men who had committed most desperate crimes in Ireland. He asserted that the Liberal Party owed it to the memory of the late great Irish Leader (Mr. Parnell) to vote for the repeal of the Coercion Act. A number of Irish Members were sent to prison under that Act, but it had not altered their opinions or views, or lowered them in the slightest degree in the estimation of their countrymen. He could understand the Coercion Act being continued if it could be pointed to as a success, but it had done nothing. In his own constituency of Clare the Act had been absolutely of no avail. Inquiries were made there and Magistrates' Courts were set up, but to all intents and purposes the Act had been a failure. It had been a failure also, he believed, all over Ireland, but particularly in Clare. The late Chief Secretary for Ireland would tell them that they had succeeded in tranquillising Ireland before the Coercion Act; but any student of Irish history must know that coercion never tranquillised a country. On the contrary, it had been the greatest possible stimulus to further agitation. The late Chief Secretary knew very well that he had put a large number of representative men in Ireland into prison, but that he had failed to change the opinion of any one of them. He knew also that public opinion supported the men he had put into gaol. With regard to the treatment accorded to prisoners under the Coercion Act, the Irish people would never forget that some individuals actually lost their lives under it. He, for one, could not forget that the Coercion Act was distinctly responsible for the death, at least, of John Mandeville. Hon. Members knew how he was fed on bread and water day after day until he was reduced almost to the point of death, and how he actually did die shortly afterwards. He himself (Mr. Redmond) had had the pleasure, or rather the advantage from the point of view of his constituents, of being in prison. Some hon. Gentlemen who were put in prison objected to wearing prison clothes. He did not care what particular clothes he wore as long as they were clean clothes, and he was not a bit ashamed of wearing the prison dress. He, however, refused to associate with the ordinary prisoners. He was asked to go out into the prison yard, and to walk shoulder to shoulder with the common prisoners. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary (Mr. A. J. Balfour) what good he expected to effect by subjecting an Irish Member to such treatment? He was in prison in Wexford Gaol. He belonged to Wexford, had spent most of his life there, and had been Member for Wexford, his father having been Member before him. Every man, woman and child in Wexford knew him. Two of the prisoners who were in the gaol with him were soldiers, who had deserted from their regiments, and committed a series of burglaries in the county. Amongst other places they had broken into was a convent in the town of Wexford. In that convent they had committed what almost amounted to an act of sacrilege in the eyes of the people, as they had taken a statue of the Blessed Virgin and hung it by the neck on to a gas-bracket. These men had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment, which was the same sentence as had been inflicted upon him for expressing his approval of the action of men in defending their houses against an eviction which had been admitted to be unjust even by the Resident Magistrate who carried it out. Well, he was asked to practically associate with these men, and because he would not do so he was put upon bread and water. He had not the slightest complaint to make of the officials of the prison. The Governor was a friend of his, and the doctor was a most respectable gentleman, who, he believed, was very sorry for what occurred. But according to the instructions of the Government of the day he was put upon bread and water for 24 hours and had 24 hours' solitary confinement, without any exercise. The next day he was asked whether he would go out with the ordinary prisoners, and because he again refused he again got 24 hours of bread and water. A third time he was asked to exercise with the common criminals, and as he again refused he got a third term of bread and water. The doctor then interfered. The bread and water meant practically nothing to him (Mr. Redmond), because he felt so indignant at the way in which he was treated that he simply ate nothing at all. The doctor, treating him as no doubt he would have treated any other patient who was brought under his notice, stopped the bread and water, and shortly afterwards sent him to the infirmary. Many hon. Members who were imprisoned under the Coercion Act went through more than he did, and he wished to know what the late Government gained by it all. After all, what was the use of putting people into prison unless as a mark of shame and degradation? Every one knew that when a man was put in prison for a genuine crime he was ashamed on regaining his liberty to hold up his head. How was he (Mr. Redmond) treated on being released? So far from being disgraced in the eyes of the community, he found on leaving the prison that the Mayor and Corporation of Wexford and all the representative men in the place were waiting for him, and he was presented on behalf of the municipality with an address of congratulation and thanks for having gone into prison under such circumstances. All the Nationalist Members who had been imprisoned were returned at the next election, and not a single soul in Ireland was affected by this treatment in the slightest degree, except in the way of being strengthened in his Nationalist opinions. Whatever may be said by the apostles of coercion, nothing could be said by anybody for such coercion as absolutely failed. If English politicians were determined to govern Ireland by coercion, they should go in for a kind of coercion that would have the result they desired. Six months' imprisonment would not stop the mouth of any man in Ireland. If they were determined to have coercion, they should repeal the present Act and introduce a drastic law which would give them the power of sending men to penal servitude for the term of their natural lives. Such coercion might succeed. The present Act would not succeed in stopping agitation in Ireland; it would only succeed in outraging the feelings of the people and in stimulating them in every possible way to continue the struggle for self-government. A Coercion Act like that now in existence, if it was enforced, was actually an incentive to crime. He was perfectly certain that there were people in various parts of Ireland who, if such a Coercion Act were in force, would, in order to resent it, break the law. Therefore, even from the point of view of those who thought that Ireland must be governed by exceptional laws, this Act was no good at all, because, while it irritated the people and outraged their feelings, it was not drastic enough to stop agitation. He appealed with confidence to the Liberal Party in this matter, because he knew perfectly well that there were Members of that Party who had denounced coercion just as strongly as the Irish Members themselves had denounced it. One English Member had gone over to Ireland and been imprisoned himself. He did not expect that the Conservatives would support the appeal that was now made to the House, because they might have some notion that in future they might want to put the Act in force for their own purposes. It might be said that the discussion was a mere waste of time, that the Bill could not become law, and that, even if it went through the Commons, the House of Lords would not pass it. Still, the fact of the House of Commons registering a vote in favour of the repeal of the Act would have a good effect in Ireland and in every portion of the world. If no Bill was to be introduced which the House of Lords would not pass, he should be glad to know what Bill could be introduced. It was the House of Commons that in the first instance initiated the Coercion Bill and passed it, and it was Ministers sitting on the Front Bench in that House who administered it. The House of Commons was, under these circumstances, the proper authority to repeal the Act, and it was for the present Government to let the Irish people understand that they were in earnest. If they were in earnest, they would leave no stone unturned to enable his hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) to pass his Bill into law.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

Mr. BARTON (Armagh, Mid.) said, he felt sure that many Members would have listened—as he had done—with sympathy to that part of the speech of the hon. Member with regard to his own experiences in prison. He did not think anyone was likely to accuse the hon. Member of want of manliness or courage, either physically or politically. But he would remind the hon. Member that his experiences in prison were regulated by the Prison Rules, and had nothing to do with the Bill. He would also remind him that the late Government had no monopoly in prosecuting Members of Parliament. Under the administration of the present Chief Secretary colleagues of the hon. Member had been prosecuted, and if those prosecutions had resulted in convictions the hon. Gentlemen to whom he referred would have been under the same Prison Rules as the hon. Member.

An hon. Member: Those Members were tried by a jury.

Mr. BARTON said, that had nothing to do with his point, which was that in this important Debate as to whether the Crimes Act should be repealed, the hon. Member had introduced an element which had no relation to the Crimes Act alone, but related to every Act bearing upon crime in Ireland. Passing from that, no one who heard it could say that the speech of the hon. and gallant Member in moving the Second Reading of the Bill was not a good-humoured speech. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had told them that to be imprisoned under the Crimes Act was an honour, and that in his own case it had been necessary to apologise for having never been in prison. Furthermore, he told them that at the present moment the Bill was not in operation in any part of Ireland.

An hon. MEMBER: One provision is.

MR. BARTON: Only one provision was in operation. Looking at the good-humoured character of the speech of the hon. and gallant Member, it was plain that he was not suffering under that burning sense of wrong that he would have them believe. The speeches of the Mover and Seconder might have made a greater impression upon him were it not that he knew of hundreds of thousands of Irishmen whom the Act of 1887 had saved from intolerable tyranny.

MR. W. REDMOND: The Coercion Act has not been put in force in your part of Ireland.

MR. BARTON said, that the measure might be properly called an Act that saved loyal men from coercion. In one thing he agreed with the hon. Member for Clare—namely, that if that Act were to be repealed, the Bill to repeal it ought to be proposed by the responsible Government, and not by a private Member. What were the facts? The Act of 1887 took more than three months to pass—namely, from the 1st of April to the 7th of July, but now it was proposed to carry the Second Reading of a Bill repealing it on a Wednesday afternoon. The present Chief Secretary himself brought forward an Amendment, in the course of the Debate which took place upon the Crimes Act, proposing a limitation of the Act to three years; and he then said that, if not so limited, but put on the Statute Book as a permanent Act, the difficulty of repealing it would be very great, because anyone proposing its repeal would have to prove a negative. If the present Bill were to pass, then the Chief Secretary ought to prove that negative, for the right hon. Gentleman should know better than anyone else the true state of Ireland at the present time. The hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) had said that the passing of the Crimes Act was not justified. He (Mr. Barton) would not argue that point or re-open it, but he would remind the House of one set of facts, and one only, which lingered in his memory. In the 15 months preceding its adoption there were 10 unpunished murders and 350 unpunished serious crimes in Ireland. The hon. and gallant Member had spoken of the Coercion Act as humiliating to Ireland, but to his (Mr. Barton's) mind it would be much more humiliating to allow crime to go unpunished in that country. The evils the Crimes Act was meant to meet were the difficulty of detecting crime and the breakdown of the jury system. These were points that the Act met. Never did an Act more speedily accomplish its object of restoring order to Ireland. There had been a good deal of cant and exaggeration used in connection with the contents of the Act of 1887, which really effected only a small alteration in the then existing law. A great part of the complaint as to coercion during the last Administration had nothing whatever to do with the Crimes Act. What was complained of even by the Chief Secretary was jury packing and lending the forces of the Crown at evictions.

MR. J. MORLEY: I did not complain of lending the forces of the Crown to protect officers in carrying out the law.

MR. BARTON said, that Members of the right hon. Gentleman's Party referred to that matter. The complaints were not so much as to the administration of the Crimes Act as to the administration of the ordinary law. Besides, the Crimes Act contained much less alteration of the law than was supposed. It only introduced the Scotch preliminary inquiry and the Scotch system of change of venue and of special jury. It extended summary jurisdiction to certain cases in which juries had been found inapplicable, and it gave the Lord Lieutenant power to prohibit and suppress illegal and dangerous associations. But though the change in the law was small, and the interference which it effected with liberty was also small, the Act comparing very favourably with previous Coercion Acts, it touched the weak spots—namely, the failure of the ordinary jury system and the failure in the detection of crime. He would remind the House of the nature of the former Coercion Act. The Act of 1881-2 was of a very different character. It suspended the habeas corpus and gave unlimited power of suppressing newspapers and public meetings, and committed the trial of murder and treason-felony to a Commission of Judges. There was a real invasion of liberty in that Act and of what the right hon. Gentleman called the rights of the Constitution. Such could not be said of the Crimes Act. It did not contain a suspension of the habeas corpus or a right of search or power to suppress newspapers. It contained no unlimited power of arrest; it did not interfere with the essential rights of citizens. All it did was to strengthen the administration of the law in places where experience had shown that it was faulty and needed strengthening. The hon. Member for Clare had told the House that the Act of 1887 was so intolerable that not a day longer should be allowed to pass before removing it from the Statute Book. But, speaking in Dublin at a meeting of the National League, the hon. Member had said that the revocation of the Coercion Act would not benefit the people of Ireland because it had fallen out of use. The hon. Member spoke truly when he said that. But the Act was not in operation. It was now out of use and did no harm to anyone; and it only remained on the Statute Book in case necessity should arise, by a revival of disorder, for its employment. Reference had been made by the hon. Member for Clare to the case of Mr. John Mandeville, but the Unionist Party never admitted that there was any shadow of foundation for the suggestions made in that case, or in many other cases. They were misrepresentations, and were part of the attacks made upon the measure at that time for reasons which would be fresh in the recollection of the House. Reference had also been made by the right hon. Gentleman to the Resident Magistrates; but the Chief Secretary himself had appointed several Resident Magistrates, who were, he said, removable, and he seemed to wish to substitute for existing Magistrates others who would be removable by popular vote.

MR. J. MORLEY: I never said so.

MR. BARTON would make no criticism upon those appointments. Two of the gentlemen appointed were friends of his own, and he asserted that they were of the same standing and class at the Bar as the gentlemen appointed by the late Government, and it therefore did not lie in the mouth of any supporter of the Government to make the fact of the appointment of Removable Magistrates a special slur upon the administration of the Crimes Act or the administration of justice in Ireland. What were the facts with regard to the success of the Act? How many people were convicted under it? The House would remember with what organised resistance it was met, and the men who were convicted under it. The figures were—in 1888, 1,082; in 1889, 597; in 1890, 391; in 1891, 186; and in June, 1892, there were only four prisoners in Ireland under the Crimes Act. It seemed to him that these figures were a record of the steady progress and success of the measure in reducing disorder and preventing breaches of the law. In 1887 there were 870 persons wholly boycotted and 3,965 persons partially boycotted, but before the end of 1891 there was not a single man or woman in Ireland either wholly or partially boycotted. That meant that 4,900 persons were relieved from intolerable persecution. Who would deny that that had been accomplished by means of the Act? During the same period agrarian offences fell off by 50 per cent., and at the end of it ordinary crime was lower than it had been for 20 years. But that was not the only result of the Unionist policy. It was said that the Act was used for the purpose of assisting the landlords in carrying out evictions. But evictions decreased during the five years of a Unionist Administration by 75 per cent. There were 13 per cent. fewer paupers in Ireland and 18 per cent. less emigration from the country at the end of that period than at the beginning.

COLONEL NOLAN: Was that due to the Coercion Act?

MR. BARTON admitted that other causes were operating beneficially in Ireland at that time, but these results would have been impossible but for the operation of the Coercion Act, which restored the elements of order and thus helped to prevent emigration and to remove pauperism. They were told by the right hon. Gentleman that there was peace in Ireland at present. But could it be said that there were the elements of permanence in the peace? Was it not a peace which was purely conditional, which was essentially temporary, and upon which even the Chief Secretary himself could not rely for the maintenance of order? They knew from the speeches of hon. Members that their attitude both in Ireland and to the Government depended upon the performance of certain promises, some of which they must know it was impossible to perform. The Chief Secretary himself would be slow to say that the present peaceful condition of Ireland was of a permanent character on which Parliament could rely in justification of the repeal of this Act. There were already signs of a revival of boycotting and intimidation, and he feared they were becoming more serious every day. The state of Clare and of some other places in Ireland at the present moment not only formed an argument against the repeal of the Crimes Act, but would justify the Chief Secretary in applying some of its provisions to those parts of the country.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Clare is now in a better condition than it has been for years.

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover): That is not saying much.

Mr. BARTON could not accept the hon. Member for Clare's statement. At the Spring and Summer Assizes of 1893 there was a scandalous failure of justice in that county, and the Judge described it as a travesty, and declared that a great responsibility rested on someone for that state of things. At the Winter Assizes there was an automatic change of venue, and then several convictions were obtained. At the Spring Assizes there was again a failure of justice. One hundred and seventeen cases were reported, but only five prisoners were tried, and only one was convicted of common assault. The Judge stated on that occasion that it was not possible to try any cases in that county without open contempt of the law. Yet they were told that the condition of Clare was satisfactory, and that it never was in a better state.

Mr. W. REDMOND said, what he had stated was that the figures showed that there was less crime in Clare now than there had been for a long time. How long that would remain the case he did not know, if evictions went on at Bodyke and other places in the county. If the evictions continued he would not answer for the future.

Mr. BARTON said, the hon. Member's interruption confirmed his statement, that the peace in Ireland did not stand upon a permanent foundation, and if that was the case who would argue that there was any ground for repealing the Crimes Act? The Chief Secretary himself had described Clare as a "black area," and as a disgrace to civilisation.

Mr. J. MORLEY: That was a long time ago.

Mr. BARTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us it is in a more satisfactory condition to-day?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes.

Mr. BARTON said, he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the failure of juries to convict was one of the elements to be dealt with. When juries failed to convict, prosecutors were afraid to prosecute. The Judge, in his Charge at the Assizes last year, said that one of the worst results of the failure of justice that had occurred at Assizes after Assizes was that no man would undertake an abortive prosecution, which would only throw fresh odium and hatred upon himself. He greatly feared that that might be a reason for the Chief Secretary's statement that the number of prosecutions was falling off. But had the right hon. Gentleman himself shown that the Crimes Act was one which he would take the responsibility of repealing? He told the House on the 7th of July last that

> "If he were persuaded that the power of change of venue and of securing special juries would put an end to this state of things, which all deplored, no amount of things he had said in the past, and no sense of mortification at having to unsay them, would prevent him from taking those powers."

The Chief Secretary would be willing, if necessity arose, to take these powers. Was he going to deprive others of them? Would he take the responsibility, in the face of these facts, of removing this Act from the Statute Book? But they had better and more direct guidance on this question even than that given by the Chief Secretary. Looking to the future, they had to ask whether there was likely to be any necessity for using this Act again. They had the plain answer from the hon. Member for Mayo, who had clearly declared his views, as to the nature of the present order, why it existed, and how long it was likely to last. He said the reason why they had not encouraged agitation in Ireland was because they had a Government in power who were doing their best to give the whole government of the country into the hands of the Irish people. That, again, was another proof that this peaceful state of Ireland was absolutely conditional, and could not be relied upon as an argument for repealing this Act. The hon. Member for Mayo went on to say that if the Tories got back to power before Home Rule was passed there would be one of the biggest land agitations that had ever been seen yet, and that there would be more necessity than ever for dealing with the evicted tenants. What did that mean? That meant that if the Unionist Party should be placed in Office there would be boycotting and disorder followed by crime, a state of things no Government could contemplate as the result of repealing this Act. He did not doubt the ability of the hon. Member to do much in the direction pointed out; but if that were to follow the repealing of this Act of Parliament, the next time an attempt was made to get up an agitation the English people would not be so easily humbugged, nor the Irish so easily aroused, nor Irish tenants so easily duped. There must be mischief if such a threat were carried out, and at all events it was sufficient warning of the sheer madness of repealing this Act. He based the defence of the Act upon the ground that it accomplished its object and that it restored order and prosperity in Ireland. It had been admitted that it did no harm to anyone now; and it could not be brought into operation without the House having the opportunity to stop that operation if it wished to do so. It was far better that it should remain on the Statute Book than that there should be, as there had been in the past, a succession of spasmodic and fitful Coercion Acts, which were a scandal, caused agitation, and led to bitter conflicts in that House and the loss of time required for other business. How many Coercion Acts had there been in the present century? No less than 28 had been introduced by Liberal Governments in 63 years. Such measures were by no means a monopoly of the present Parliament or of the present Chief Secretary. During Grattan's Parliament there were 14 Coercion Acts before 1795, and many more before 1800. So far as the experience of the past went, whether in the United Parliament or in the Irish Parliament, they would see how necessary it had been to introduce continuous measures of this kind, and he believed their spasmodic character had been the real obstacle to their success. It was far more statesmanlike and far more calculated to effect the purpose to let the Act remain on the Statute Book, and then months of weary waiting would be saved if it were required to be put in operation. Everyone hoped the time would come when there would be no necessity for exceptional legislation for Ireland; but in the face of recent history, of what they all knew of the present condition of Ireland, and of the threats he had quoted which had been held out, nobody could say that that time had yet arrived. He felt satisfied that in resisting this Bill he was not open to any charge by hon. Members from Ireland, while he was convinced he was discharging his duty to his Irish fellow-countrymen and his constituents. No Act of recent times had been of greater public benefit than this, and it would be a mistaken and most unwise course to entertain for a moment the notion under present circumstances of depriving the Irish Government of the means of once for all restoring order and peace in Ireland.

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helens) seconded the Amendment for the same reason which prompted him on the passing of the Bill in 1882. It was not often that an English Member had the opportunity of intervening in an Irish Debate. He admitted that the Act was an exceptional piece of legislation, and he did not support it simply because it was brought in by the Leaders of his own Party; but he supported it because he believed it was absolutely necessary for the welfare of Ireland. What was the grievance on which Irish Members rested this demand? No case had been made out now for repealing it. It could never have touched a single honest man in Ireland.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I beg your pardon; it touched me.

Mr. SETON-KARR hoped he had not inadvertently touched the hon. Member, but in that case it probably was the misfortune and not the fault of the hon. Member; he must have been in bad company. It had never touched any man who did not deserve it. They were asked to vote for the repeal of this Act on the ground that it was an exceptional measure. But why need it be exceptional? He would make this offer: that, if either the Government or any Irish Member would propose to extend the Act to the rest of the United Kingdom, he would support them. If that were done a great cause of complaint would be removed. But the one thing that convinced him that the Act was necessary in Ireland at the time it was passed was that trial by jury did not operate in that country. The present state of Ireland justified the passing of the Act, and it would be better to keep it and so save the time that would have to be spent in passing another Act if the weapon of exceptional legislation again became necessary. It was said that Parliament could pass the Bill if necessary in another Session; but there had been a sufficient waste of time last year, when every Member of the House was impressed with so great a scandal. No responsibility had been brought home to the men who necessitated that situation; and the result had been that the English Members, representing five-sixths of the interests of the United Kingdom, had all their measures of domestic reform thrown back or shelved. He offered that argument to English Members in every part of the House, and they should not deprive themselves of a weapon which had been so successful in dealing with an exceptional state of things in Ireland in the past which they had been threatened on good authority might recur. He believed that in the present condition of affairs English Members would be false to the interests of their constituents and their country if they allowed even the possibility of such waste of time. If a Unionist Government came into power it was quite possible, were the Bill repealed, that they would have a return in Ireland of the state of affairs which prevailed in 1887; they would have a fresh agitation set on foot, and the loyalist minority would be threatened and boycotted. Another Coercion Act would then be required, and what in such circumstances would become of the legislative reforms which English Members desired to see carried? All the time of the House would again be taken up with the question of coercion. It was therefore in their own interest that English Members should oppose the repeal of the Act. Let the Act remain on the shelf to be brought down only as necessity might require. Irish Members might believe him when he said that he had no desire to assist in passing what were called coercive measures for Ireland unless there was absolute necessity for it. He thought the case had been amply made out, and, as far as he was concerned, he should be only too glad to support universal legislation of this kind were it thought to be necessary. But bearing in mind the time, trouble, and responsibility incurred in passing the Bill in the past, and the fact that its operation had so redounded to the benefit and prosperity of Ireland, as well as of the United Kingdom, he did trust every English Member would oppose the repeal of it.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Barton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover) hoped he would not be guilty of discourtesy if in the absence of the Mover and Seconder of the Bill he pointed out that their speeches had afforded convincing proof of the inconvenience and even absurdity of approaching questions of that magnitude on a Wednesday afternoon. He would be the last person to disparage those speeches, for they all enjoyed the breezy geniality of the hon. and gallant Colonel, and they also listened with respectful attention to the hon. Member for Clare; but he put it to both hon. Gentlemen and to the Chief Secretary for Ireland as well, whether those speeches were calculated to induce the House to reverse its decision upon a great measure of policy solemnly undertaken some years ago? The hon. and gallant Mover dilated on the question of trial by jury, but the Chief Secretary knew that he (Mr. Wyndham) could bring forward sheaves of quotations from speeches by the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues referring to the difficulty of obtaining convictions in Ireland. The present Secretary for War, in 1885, said they could not be sure of getting a conviction on the clearest evidence, and it was not merely reasonable but it was necessary to provide some measure to overcome that difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman added that such a measure might very well be made part of the permanent law of the land. He quoted this to show that the measure before the House dealt with a vast question of policy upon which both Parties in the House had held opinions antagonistic to those put forward by the Mover of the Bill. Both Parties in the State had at one time or another encountered the difficulty of not being able to secure verdicts in accordance with the evidence, and both sides had been forced to resort to exceptional and repressive legislation in order to fill up that defect in the social condition of Ireland. But could they discuss the social conditions of Ireland during the last 30 years in the course of a Debate of three or four hours? Were they to be asked to give their verdict on the two speeches they had heard, followed by what seemed to be a conspiracy of silence? Could they be expected under such circumstances to reverse the definite and deliberate policy of the Unionist Party with regard to Ireland? What subjects did the hon. and gallant Member deal with? Trial by jury, change of venue, special juries, prison treatment, capabilities of Magistrates, the discipline of the police, and a thousand other matters which had nothing on earth to do with the principle of adopting repressive legislation for Ireland. The House was being asked to reproduce in four hours a three months' Debate on the Crimes Act, and long and protracted Debates on the Irish Estimates of six years. Anybody who remembered the Debates on jury-packing, prison treatment, the unfortunate death of Mandeville, and many other topics, would feel the absurdity of asking them to determine a principle of policy in a Debate hampered by faint echoes of ancient controversy. They had become faint, and hon. Members had been sitting like Rip Van Winkles listening to references to topics the mere mention of which at one time produced storms of angry recrimination. But now they were met with good-tempered laughter, not because their moral nature had been reformed, but because they had learned the emptiness and hollowness of such proceedings. He had been glad to forget the minor details—such as the weight and ages of prisoners—which were so impressed on his mind when these controversies raged; he hoped nothing said that afternoon would rescue them from the oblivion into which they had passed; and he certainly had no wish to stir up ancient memories by criticising the acts of men which the Unionist Party held to be blameworthy and illegal, but which were deliberately done as a protest against the Crimes Act. He wished to take advantage of that lull in the storm of controversy and to ask the House to look upon these matters in the light of the relation of law to social order, and to look upon this Act as one event in an historical series of events. If they did that the first thing which must strike them would be the ludicrous similarity between the position of the Government to-day and that of the Tory Government of 1885. Both were in Office by virtue of Irish votes. The Tory Government allowed the Crimes Act to lapse, but he did not think that by reason of that action they were open to the charge of cynicism so often levelled against them by the present Administration. A Government took Office in order to do more things than one; it sought to achieve many matters of the highest importance, and it could not sacrifice itself upon one matter which constituted only an item in its programme. No doubt if right hon. Gentlemen opposite voted that afternoon in support of the repeal of the Crimes Act they would be voting in accordance with their consciences. Now, he would like to consider this question in the light of the alternations between Acts of Coercion and measures of conciliation. This was an old story, because they found both Parties during the last 25 years alternatively passing exceptional legislation and men announcing that they were going to give it up in favour of a policy of conciliation. This see-saw policy had gone on all that time, and would go on until both political Parties adopted finally one plan or another of a sufficiently drastic and adequate character. They were asked this evening to repeal the Crimes Act of 1887 simply because it had conduced to social order in Ireland. They passed the Crimes Act of 1887 in order to bring the law into harmony with social order in Ireland. The Home Rule Bill, according to its author, was introduced for the same purpose. It was then, and was still, a question how social order could be reconciled with the law in Ireland—how just verdicts from juries could be secured, the rights of property protected, and the intimidation of the subject prevented. Two alternatives had been presented to secure this object—exceptional legislation and Home Rule for Ireland. Parliament had adopted the former, and rejected Home Rule in 1886. It would be fatal if the Government that afternoon went back from the point at which Parliament arrived in 1886—the point of deciding between effective and permanent legislation of an exceptional character and an ample measure of Home Rule. If the Government, in spite of the experience of 1885, reverted to a policy of endeavouring to govern Ireland under the ordinary law, whilst withholding from it the demand for Home Rule, they would be doomed to meet again with disappointment and failure. He admitted that the Chief Secretary for Ireland was entitled to vote for this Motion to-day, but only on the condition that he introduced a Home Rule Bill on Monday. His Party had recognised the fact that in Ireland you could not be sure of getting juries to convict, and that there were some convictions that were justifiable, some that were not, and cases in which they were indeed sometimes good, sometimes bad, and sometimes indifferent. But the fact stood the same. It was true, then, that in 1886 you could not be sure of getting a conviction from a jury. Was the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary sure that they would be able to get a conviction now? The late Prime Minister said it was not to be denied that there was great interference with individual liberty in the shape of intimidation. He asked whether there was no intimidation now, and whether, if the Chief Secretary and his Party should be driven from Office, they might not get more intimidation, and be unable again to protect the property of the landlords or to get convictions from juries? He said that the old difficulties were still there, and if there was any difference it was only a difference of degree, and one upon which they could not count. These were the three glaring defects in the social order in Ireland which no responsible Minister could look at with equanimity. The late Prime Minister laid down as the fruit of ripe experience that there were only two alternative cures for social disorder in Ireland. One was Home Rule, and the other was repressive legislation of a permanent character—that was to say, if they could not get juries to convict, they must have it in their power to institute tribunals which would convict, and to change the venue of trial. He was not going this evening to argue upon the merits of the Crimes Act which they were asked to repeal. He said, in the first place, without deciding upon its merits, it was their plan for dealing with these defects in the social condition of Ireland, and that it was the late Prime Minister's alternative plan, and that by implication he was bound to maintain the Crimes Act, which contained a great many of the provisions which he himself had stated were necessary. The Secretary for Scotland had admitted also that a good many of the provisions of the Crimes Act were the settled policy of the Party to which he belonged in the absence of Home Rule. Therefore, some kind of Crimes Act, closely resembling the Crimes Act in question this evening was the second string of the Government bow, and they could not repeal that Act unless they were prepared forthwith to introduce a Home Rule Bill again. Again he would point out that one of the alternatives had more authority drawn from the sanction of that House than the other. The Crimes Act was passed by a majority of 101 on its Second Reading. The Third Reading was passed by a majority of 87. They knew that if the Government drummed up all their supporters they could not command a majority such as that this evening. They might say that the country at the last General Election voted against the plan of the Conservative Party for dealing with social disorder in Ireland. That was a plausible argument; but if the late Prime Minister was right in laying down that these were the only two surviving alternative plans for governing Ireland, it became necessary to find out which plan was accepted by the country with any authority. But they knew perfectly well that the only reason which prevented the Government from adopting that alternative policy was that they felt they dared not go to the country on the question of

Home Rule. Therefore, if the Government voted for the Motion, knowing that they could not get the country to agree that Home Rule was better than exceptional legislation, they did so simply to please their Irish supporters by allowing exceptional legislation to lapse. He argued that the Government were committed to the Crimes Act of 1887 or to something like it; and they were especially committed to some of its provisions because they had declared that unless Home Rule was granted some such legislation was necessary. He believed that if the Coercion Act lapsed, the Government could not even prevent the carrying of arms, and so would be unable to keep order in Ulster. He knew that his argument was an opportunist argument, not dealing with the merits of the Act. He must say that he believed that the Act was a good one, and that the Bill now before the House was a mischievous one. Mischievous as it was, it was also inopportune. Upon one thing they were agreed, and that was as to the value of Parliamentary time. They saw that for two years practically all English legislation had been hung up. [Mr. J. MORLEY: The Parish Councils Bill.] Well, that was the only measure. They had failed either through their fault or their misfortune to pass any Bill but one. The waste of time hitherto had been caused by the merely negative method of bringing in Bills of such a character and in such numbers as to prevent all chance of any of them passing. But there were far more drastic methods of wasting time. They wasted only the present time if they failed to pass Bills. If they passed bad Bills, they wasted the future time needed for their repeal; while if they repealed good laws they wasted the time of the present and the past, and also time in the future, which would be needed for their re-enactment. That was the plan of the hon. and gallant Member this afternoon. [Colonel NOLAN: I am repealing a bad Bill.] Of course, his hon. and gallant Friend was entitled to say that. But to support his argument he might refer to *The Daily News*. That newspaper explained that it was not sufficient for a measure to be a good measure, but that measures of positive legislation must be given precedence in accordance with urgency. Consequently, bad Bills could only be repealed if there was urgency. He asked whether this was the time of day to look up the Statute Book in order to find bad laws, so that they might set themselves to repeal them? If they wanted to repeal bad laws, there was the Lord's Day Observance Act, with which they might very well dispense. Before they could vote for the measure brought forward this evening it must be proved that the Crimes Act of 1887 was injurious, and that it was inflicting present injury, and that that injury was of so grave a character that it raised in the minority upon which it was inflicted a deep and passionate sense of injustice, and that the people of the country should have given unmistakable signs that they preferred the policy of the Government to the plan of the Conservative Party.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that but for the speech of the hon. Member for Clare, he should have been content to have given a silent vote upon this Bill. He was perfectly content to rest his vote on the speech of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Mid Armagh. But he wished to draw attention to a statement of the hon. Member for Clare. That hon. Member had said that the Crimes Act had been a failure. He wished to show from a Parliamentary Return that one of the most important provisions of the Act, so far from having proved a failure, had proved a great success. If he asked any Member below the Gangway opposite to which clause of the Act he had the greatest objection, he would undoubtedly say the 1st clause, which authorised secret inquiries. ["No, no!"] At any rate, that was the clause most fiercely resisted in the House. It was quite accurate to say that that clause had not had any effect in County Clare. The inquiries held with reference to the commission of gross offences resulted in the defeat of the authorities. But he would take another county which for a long time rivalled Clare in disorder—the County of Kerry. Six inquiries were held under the first section of the Crimes Act. What was the result? In five out of the six cases prosecutions took place and convictions followed. He did not want the House to run away with the idea that these were trifling offences. The first case was one of firing at and wounding, and the inquiry resulted in a prosecution and conviction and a sentence of 20 years' penal servitude. The second case was one of attacking a dwelling-house and firing at the person. In that also a conviction was obtained. The four others were cases of murder. In the first there was a conviction and execution; in the second, he admitted, the inquiry was abandoned; in the third a man was convicted and executed; and in the last two men were convicted and sentenced to death. In all these cases secret inquiries were held only because it was impossible to get evidence in any other way, and if the Crimes Act had not contained that clause it would have been impossible to prosecute. Was it not a good thing, a righteous and wise thing, to get evidence even by these means in order to punish and convict these criminals? The Chief Secretary was now asked to part with that power; but nothing was more certain than that, if an outbreak of crime should again occur in Ireland and this Repeal Bill was carried, such atrocious criminals must escape, or the House must pass months in passing another Act. The Chief Secretary said that the state of County Clare was tolerably satisfactory. [Mr. J. MORLEY: I said, "Much more satisfactory."] He thought that the right hon. Gentleman went a little further than that. But not long ago the right hon. Gentleman admitted that a part of Clare, Limerick, and Cork formed a black area which was an absolute disgrace to civilisation. What was the position to-day? Was it not the case that in this area agrarian crime could be committed with absolute impunity? In the first place, a most effective police force was unable to detect it, and in the few cases in which it was detected and offenders were brought to trial the only chance of getting a conviction for an offence committed in County Clare was to have the case tried out of the county. Assizes were held year after year in the County of Clare, and evidence was given, but a jury failed to convict. [*A laugh.*] He knew what hon. Gentlemen were laughing about. They were laughing about Mr. Justice O'Brien. Ever since 1882, when he presided over the Phœnix Park trials and the Lough Mask murder trials, he had carried his life in his hand. That was why hon. Members laughed. What happened universally in the County of Clare was this—that at the Spring and Summer Assizes it was absolutely impossible to get any conviction for agrarian offences no matter what the evidence was. ["No, no!"] What was the use of saying "No, no" when the records were before the country?

MR. W. REDMOND: Is it not the fact that the great majority of prisoners brought up at these Assizes are charged with ordinary crime, and that the difficulty of obtaining a verdict of guilty from the jury arises from the fact that Mr. Justice O'Brien is in the habit of passing outrageous sentences?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, he knew nothing of the kind; therefore he was not going to answer the question. The Chief Secretary knew that the only chance the Crown had in the County of Clare, or had had for some time back, had been that these special agrarian or political offences should be tried out of the county, and, fortunately for the Crown and for society, the Winter Assize Act furnished a means for that. The Chief Secretary knew that he had secured convictions for offences committed in Clare when they were tried in Cork, which he never would have secured if they had been tried in Ennis, County Clare. As far as these three areas were concerned, agrarian crime could be committed in them with absolute impunity, and in face of that state of things the House was asked to part with the Crimes Act. He maintained that the Chief Secretary ought to have used the measure in these areas before now. It was cruel to the people in the parts of the country affected to ask them to live under the conditions they had been forced to live under during the last two years. The right hon. Gentleman had compelled them to do so simply and solely because he declined to use the powers which this Act gave him. It was too much to ask Parliament to give up these powers which could be used in the areas indicated with such effect now and which might have to be used in the future in Ireland. The hon. Member for Armagh had pointed to a speech made by the hon. Member for East Mayo, and had said that that hon. Member had given them a warning in his speech at Lurgan in December last. He (Mr. T. W. Russell) did not complain of that speech. Probably it was the most foolish speech that the hon. Member for Mayo ever delivered——

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: And that is saying a good deal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said, the speech was foolish from that stand-point. It was also foolish to threaten in advance. While he did not doubt the hon. Member's willingness to embarrass any future Government in Ireland that would not do his bidding, he was not quite so sure of the hon. Member's power to carry out his threats. In his (Mr. T. W. Russell's) opinion, one set of evicted tenants was quite enough for this century. He believed that the Irish tenants would think twice and thrice—would think a very long time—before they repeated what they had done in the past at the hon. Gentleman's bidding. The whole country had seen the suffering of those people; the whole country had realised their losses, and no matter how the hon. Member for East Mayo might threaten any Government in the future he (Mr. T. W. Russell) thought he would find that he was the fugleman of an imaginary army when he called the tenants out. Therefore, he did not attach much weight to the hon. Member's threat of land agitation and the country being filled with crime and disorder and the Crimes Act being taken down from the shelf. But these times might come round again in Ireland; and not being in favour of an Irish Parliament managing Irish affairs, he was not prepared that they should go through the Session of 1887 again solely because of the doctrinaire opinions of hon. Members sitting on the Front Ministerial Bench who were opposed to the Crimes Act. He (Mr. T. W. Russell) opposed the repeal of this Act because he came from a part of the country where they did not feel the grievance of it, and never had done. He thought it was of importance for them to realise that there were at least a couple of millions of people in Ireland who, practically, had never known that there was what was called a Coercion Act in force there. Why did they not know it? Simply because the people in those parts of the country did not seek to coerce other people. Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite were the greatest coercionists who ever existed in Ireland. They spent their time in coercing people who did not agree with them, and carried their coercion to such an extent that it was absolutely necessary that they should be coerced in turn, so that other people might have freedom. He (Mr. T. W. Russell) came from a part of the country—he represented it—where the grievance of this Act had never been felt, where no man had been tried under it, because no man had broken the law that would have brought him under it, and, not being engaged in coercing other people, there was no reason why hon. Gentlemen opposite should be at liberty to coerce them. The great mass of the people of Ireland had not been touched by this Act. The Act was passed for the purpose of stopping people from doing things that they had no right to do, and he held that it would be absolute folly in the face of the work this Parliament would have to do in the future to repeal this Act—which was not in operation in any part of Ireland, and was hurting no one—when they might in the course of a few years have to devote months to the work of re-enacting it. He should vote for the Amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The hon. Member for Dover in his very interesting and, I may say, witty speech, congratulated the House on the fact that we are only listening to the faint echo of ancient controversies of which I have no wish to revive the memory. The hon. Member who has just sat down characteristically endeavours to make the echo more than faint. He has talked about the doctrinaire opinions that prevail on this Bench, and I presume that in using that word, with which I am only too familiar, he intends to apply it to me. I think that, on the whole, the condition of Ireland today under the doctrinaire rule contrasts very favourably with its condition under any other rule that it has passed under for very many years. But before we go into the larger and more apposite question raised by the hon. Member for Dover, I should like first to say a few words as to some of the details raised in the speech—of which I do not complain—of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The hon. Member talked about the enormity of dropping Section 1 of the Crimes Act, which authorises courts of secret inquiry.

The hon. Member quoted—and he was quite right in doing so from a controversial point of view—the one case which no doubt does seem to show that the conviction followed from holding this secret inquiry——

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I admitted that these inquiries had failed in County Clare.

Mr. J. MORLEY: He quoted the case of Kerry. But you cannot have regard to this clause without viewing its operation as a whole. Now, according to the Return moved for by the hon. Member himself, there were 31 of these inquiries held, and convictions were obtained in 11 cases, and in 11 cases only, and of these 11 five were obtained in County Kerry. I do not say for a moment that 11 convictions out of 31 cases are not worth having; but in the worst places, especially in County Clare, the three inquiries which were held there under the very skilful magistrate who held the inquiries in Kerry and who held the inquiry in Dublin the other day, these inquiries brought nothing to light and they might just as well never have been held. Take Dublin itself. I have been reproached, I think by the hon. Member for Clare, with myself authorising the holding of courts of secret inquiry.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. MORLEY: There have been, in all, three courts of secret inquiry held in Dublin from the winter of 1891 under the Explosives Act, one under the late Chief Secretary and two during the time we have been in Office. First of all, I point out that these inquiries were held under the general law, a law prevailing as much in England and Scotland as it does in Ireland. Secondly, I felt that it was not open to me in case of crimes of this enormity—dynamite crimes—to abstain from using any weapon that was Constitutionally within my reach. I had no faith in these courts, and I call the attention of the House to this fact—that in no one of the three inquiries was any person made amenable, or was any evidence brought into them which could be available for that purpose. And an administrator like Lord Spencer himself, who admits that, except in the case of the Phœnix Park murders—I of course allow a very remarkable exception—to his knowledge and belief, the secret inquiry is not a valuable one in the hands of any Government. The hon. Member for Tyrone talked about the state of a certain disturbed area, and I might call the attention of the House to the fact that the Crimes Act was introduced in 1887 with a view practically to that area alone. As I reminded the House in the Debates on the Bill of 1887, it was really only for the sake of one-sixth of the area of Ireland that this extraordinarily powerful engine was constructed and passed through this House. It has been doubted, and no one who heard the Member for South Tyrone would doubt, whether the condition of that area is not as bad or almost as bad as it ever was, and is not bad enough to resort to exceptional law. The hon. Member says that agrarian crime is prevalent in Clare—in that dark area of a corner of Kerry, a corner of Limerick, a piece of Cork, and a good deal, but not all, of Clare. He says I ought to have used powers which I could have used by issuing proclamations under the Crimes Act long before now. Well, the proof of these things has been the result. I do not hesitate to say that supposing for a year or two years I had placed Clare again under proclamations under the Crimes Act—I do not believe that the condition of Clare would in these circumstances have been nearly so satisfactory as it is now, and the hon. Member blamed me for not doing that. If you did introduce special criminal law with all the effects which what is called coercion bears on the minds of the peasantry, you would not have, you could not have, upon your side any of those moral forces which I have endeavoured to attract to my side. You would have all the old prejudice and passion raised instead, as circumstances seem to show, of finding the state of things in County Clare, and in the disturbed area becoming certainly alleviated to a degree which a year and a-half ago, when I took this responsible office I hold, I did not dream of as being possible. The hon. Member for Mid Armagh (Mr. Barton) talked rather at large about the condition of this disturbed area, and the Member for South Tyrone seemed to be under the same impression. I am able to state here on the responsible authority of officers who have known Clare for years and years, who have been in contact with the disorderly elements of its population, who have had to investigate offences against the law in that county, that Clare is quieter than it has been at any time since 1886. Since the 1st of January of the present year—that is to say, a full quarter of a year—there have been in Clare only 12 cases of crime of all kinds. That is a very remarkable result; and when the hon. Member says I ought to have done something which I did not do, I do not believe anything I could have done would have produced a more satisfactory result. But let us go on. Let us see how far doctrinaire opinions are justified or not justified in the various parts of that dark area. The hon. Member mentioned a corner of Kerry. Well, during the 20 months—the present Government has been in Office 20 months—therefore, I offer our period of 20 months so compared with the preceding 20 months—in the 20 months 1890-92, ending August, 1892, the recorded outrages were 235. In our 20 months from August, 1892, till April, 1894, the figure of 235 has sunk to 147. In the County of Cork in the first quarter of 1892 there were 18 reported cases over the disturbed area. In the same period in 1893 there were 10 cases, and I would call the attention of the House—and I am sure they will take it from me when I state it with full responsibility—it is not merely the decline in the numbers of these offences, it is the fact that there is a more marked improvement, if I may so, in the nature of the crimes themselves. The crimes were bad enough taken as a whole, but in the language—mark you the technical language—of the official experts, crime is now far less serious than it has been at any previous time since 1886. I would like to say one word or two as to how this has been effected. It has been effected largely, no doubt, by the fact that there is to a certain extent a sympathy with the present Government. I am well acquainted with the fact that I am reproached with governing Ireland by the aid of gentlemen below the Gangway and by the aid of the clergy. Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, that I think a man is very unwise who attempts to govern Ireland unless he has got the clergy and those who are the leaders of popular opinion on his side. If it is a disgrace to have the moral leaders of the community on the side of the Executive Government, that is a disgrace I am quite willing to face and encounter. But how has this improvement been effected? Not merely by the fact that certain moral and popular forces have been on the side of the Executive Government, but also because I knew perfectly well that if you were to attempt to govern Ireland by exceptional law, that was all the stronger reason why you should resort to every means that the ordinary law and vigour of administration placed within your reach. And what has been done? There has been consistent vigilant patrolling. All the resources of police foresight, police caution, police supervision have been used to the full, and that is what I have always urged since 1880, when I first ventured to press upon the attention of this country the question of the government of Ireland by exceptional law. If the hon. Gentleman will search the records he will find I opposed the Bill of 1880, and I opposed the Bill of 1882. I never pretended that Ireland is a very easy country to keep quiet. I have never said that a weak, nerveless Government will do well in Ireland, but I have said that you will do more by using vigorously, discreetly, and watchfully the powers and instruments that the ordinary law and the ordinary machinery of the Administration placed in your hands than by resorting to violent measures, and to a law that permanently suspends trial by jury in those very cases where trial by jury is most essential as a guarantee for the freedom of the subject. That is the only alternative course you have. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman opposite will not agree with me when I say he will find there is more force in this position than there is in the almost automatic resort to exceptional Criminal Law. Resort to expedients, such as the suspension of trial by jury, weakens the nerve, if I may so speak, of the ordinary Executive officers. They know they have got this tremendous weapon within grasp, and that makes them indisposed to use to the best and the full extent the ordinary powers of the law. There is only one more argument of the hon. Member for Tyrone to which I shall refer. He says he speaks for

2,000,000 of the population of Ireland. [*Laughter.*]

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL : I did not say so. That may do to raise a laugh, but what I did say was that there were millions of people in Ireland who never knew that there was a Coercion Act in force.

Mr. J. MORLEY : I did not wish to raise a laugh. I spoke seriously. He said that 2,000,000 people did not know that the Act was in force. That is the argument of despotism all over. I might suspend trial by jury for all kinds of offences, in England I mean, and the ordinary citizen would not be affected. It would not affect the hon. Member or myself, but would any hon. Member dare to get up to propose for England laws such as this which we are asked to repeal for Ireland ? Twenty millions of people in England would never know a Coercion Act had been passed ; it would not come home to them, but let them try it at the polls. The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Wyndham) in his excellent speech dealt with the question before the House with a certain amount of breadth which enables one to attempt to deal with it. But the hon. Member made one very momentous admission, and he repeated it over and over again. He said, and based his whole argument on this, that the alternative to Home Rule is coercion. That was the basis of his whole argument. He took to himself and ratified the proposition which he attributed to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, that the alternative as between this permanent and perpetual coercion is some such proposition of Home Rule as we have recommended to the House. The hon. and learned Member for Mid Armagh quoted some remarks of mine made in 1887 while this Bill was in progress through the House, and he reminded me that I had moved an Amendment in effect limiting the operation of the Act to three years. That was a very good Amendment unfavourably received. That Amendment, unlike most of the Amendments to the Act of 1887, was fortunately discussed—most of the Amendments to that Act were summarily dismissed. I think they were not put, and whether they were put or not they were not discussed—the very course which so outraged hon. Gentlemen last year. was then practised in this case. Now, Sir, I should be content to argue on the principle which I brought before the House in 1887, but the hon. Member for Dover says the whole question which we are discussing turns upon our view of the law to social order. I do not much quarrel with that way of stating the case. He says the see-saw between Parties will go on. In fact, he says very much what Lord Salisbury said when he remarked that the failure of our government in Ireland is due to the effects of temperature at Westminister and not to the effects of a temperature in Ireland itself. The hon. Member means the same thing. I cannot suppose that anything is worse if you want to improve a population like the population of Ireland, who have been accustomed to bad conditions and bad government. They unfortunately have not the same feelings towards the law and its administrators as we have in this country. I quite agree that you have to look into the roots of social order. I cannot imagine anything less calculated to inspire the population of Ireland with respect for the Criminal Law than the fact now admitted by the Member for Dover — and sufficiently obvious without the admission —that the Criminal Law in its most important aspects, in those parts which go deepest into the daily life of the community, is to move up and down, and that there is to be trial by jury enforced one day and not another. I cannot, I say, conceive anything less likely than that to inspire the Irish people with respect for the law. If you had passed a Crimes Act which suspended trial by jury for good without allowing the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant to intervene, I could imagine that there was something to be said for the hon. Member's position, though it would be very difficult. But in this case the question whether this Act is to be operative or not, whether it is to be called into life or left dormant and dead, is dependent on the political changes at Westminster. I do not believe there could be anything less calculated to inspire people with respect for the gravity, the majesty, the constancy and steadfastness of the law and its administration. The hon. Member for Dover says it is monstrous to attempt to undo in one afternoon what the House took three months to pass. I do not follow that argument at all. If you were going to specify particular provisions to which you object, or do not object, then I could understand that there was some force in the argument of the hon. Member; but it seems to me that we have plenty of time this afternoon to affirm the principle—and we on this side of the House should be eternally disgraced if we hesitated to affirm it at the first available opportunity — that Ireland is not to be placed under permanent exceptional criminal repressive law in perpetuity. The hon. Member for Dover says that I may be entitled to vote for this Motion if I bring in a Home Rule Bill on Monday. Well, I shall not bring in a Home Rule Bill on Monday, because we have other business to do. I should vote for this Bill in any case, whatever I thought of the date on which a Home Rule Bill should be brought in. I do not deny, as I have already said, the difficulties and dangers of Irish government. I recognise to the full the necessity of a firm government in Ireland, but let us look for a moment at the history of previous recognitions of the maxim that Ireland needs firm government. First of all, you do not get it. You get alterations in the government and policy of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. A. J. Balfour) and of us who sit on this Bench. I think that is not well calculated to strengthen the Irish belief in the firmness and uniformity of government. It came out in 1887, in the Debates on the Coercion Bill—I do not wish to use a more exasperating word — that never before was a Coercion Bill brought in without a Preamble. The Crimes Act of 1887 occupies what I must say is a bad pre-eminence in the unfortunately long list of Coercion Acts; it has no Preamble, and it starts in all its naked beauty without any explanation. No Government ever before embarked upon the proposal of a Coercion Bill without specifying in it the conditions which made such a proposal justifiable. That is true of the Act of 1847, of the Peace Preservation Act of 1870, and of the Coercion Act of 1882. In these cases the Preamble set forth some special reason why a resort to exceptional legislation was necessary. It is instructive, as showing the condition of Ireland 60 years ago and to-day, that when the Coercion Act of 1832 or 1833 was passed there were no fewer than 248 agrarian homicides in that year, whereas since the present Government came into power there has not been a single agrarian homicide. My point is this—that if, when crime swept over the country, it was thought necessary to justify this kind of legislation by chapter and verse, so to speak, so much the more unjustifiable is it now, when Ireland is perfectly tranquil, that we should say to her, "We impose upon you for ever this stigma—we take from you for ever your guarantees for freedom." It may be said by hon. Members opposite that the policy of the Crimes Act of 1887 was that if Ireland became tranquil the proclamation could be revoked. But that does not go to the root of our objection to this perpetual Crimes Act. The root of our objection to it is that it takes for granted that Ireland is, and will continue to be for an indefinite length of time, irreconcilable to our ideas of law and order. I, for one, have never denied that in an emergency, such for instance as arose in Ireland in 1867, it may become necessary for the Government to suspend the guarantees for the liberty and equality of the subject. You may use a Coercion Act without offence against the principles of the Constitution—you may use it to deal with an active emergency. That is one thing, but to alter the whole Criminal Law of Ireland in its most vital, organic respects, and to alter it for always, is another thing, and is to put Ireland in a position which I, for one, will never be a party to. The hon. Member for Dover or the hon. Member for Mid Armagh referred to the value of this Crimes Act in certain times, and the argument has been used again and again since the present Government came into power, and since the beginning of the Session of 1893, that we were guilty of really criminal conduct in stripping ourselves of the powers under the Act. I have been looking into the percentage of persons made amenable to indictable offences in Ireland under the present Government and the percentage made amenable during the active existence of the Crimes Act. Under the late Government the percentage was 41, and under the present Government, in spite of having stripped themselves of those extraordinary powers, the number of persons made amenable was 46 per cent. I am not going to weary the House with figures, but everybody will see that these are figures which bear upon the argument. I will just give one other figure as to proceedings on indictment before a jury by the present Government, and I contrast these proceedings with proceedings by summary jurisdiction under the Crimes Act of 1887 by the late Government in respect of the three following offences :—Firstly, riot and unlawful assembly ; secondly, forcible possession ; and, thirdly, assaults on or resistance to the sheriff, constable, or bailiff. Under the Crimes Act the percentage of convictions was 72, and 25 persons were discharged or acquitted. Under indictment by the present Government we have obtained 78 per cent. of convictions, and only 15 persons have been acquitted or discharged. These figures, I believe, are a means of testing what we have lost by dropping the provisions of the Crimes Act. Well, Sir, whatever may be said by hon. Members opposite as to the merits of the Crimes Act, we to-day shall without any scruple or hesitation support the Bill to repeal that Act. We will not be parties to retaining on the Statute Book longer than we can help a law which in one portion of the Three Kingdoms withdraws the protection of jury trial from persons accused of certain offences. The Act withdraws that protection from persons accused of combination, and from persons under certain conditions attending public meeting. It executes a special repressive procedure in cases of trespass under the guise of forcible possession, and it withdraws trial by jury from persons charged with belonging to an Association which the Lord Lieutenant may make illegal by a stroke of his pen. All these conditions are such as to make the people dislike and distrust the law. As to change of venue, I do not deny that a provision of that kind may be convenient. But my view is that by retaining this Act on the Statute Book, if you go to-morrow to the Court of Queen's Bench to apply for a change of venue on ordinary grounds, you make it very easy for the Court to say to you, "You have the Crimes Act. What more do you want ? You can get this thing by a stroke of the pen." In that way I think that the existence of this Act has a mischievous operation on the mind and procedure of the Court of Queen's Bench. As to the other points in the Act, I have nothing to say beyond what I have already said. It unjustly places a stigma upon Ireland. If you insist upon retaining this Act on the Statute Book this afternoon, you are by your attitude branding with the deepest condemnation your own British government in Ireland. You cannot have a more complete admission that your government in Ireland has failed than the insistence by the Party opposite on retaining this astounding violation of Constitutional Law, this violation of the Treaty of Union which, according to Mr. Pitt himself, promised to give equality of law in a practically identical form to the two contracting parties to the Treaty. It is on that ground that I shall with peculiar pleasure vote for the Second Reading of this Bill.

Mr. CARSON (Dublin University) said, he must confess it occurred to him, who was not very long a Member of that House, as a peculiar phase in their Parliamentary procedure, that they should be calmly asked, on a Wednesday afternoon, at the suggestion of a private Member, to repeal a Bill the Second Reading of which took seven long days of this House ; and he must say he thought when the Government, through the mouth of the Chief Secretary, had practically adopted the Bill as one the Government were prepared to support, there was all the more reason in demurring to the suggestion made by the hon. and gallant Member who proposed it, and the hon. Member who seconded it, that they should, by a vote of the House to-day, in any wise attempt to alter or repeal the Criminal Law and Procedure Act of 1887. As regarded the case that had been made by the right hon. Gentleman, he said at the very outset of his remarks that he did not for a moment quarrel with regard to what the right hon. Gentleman had said as to the condition of Ireland under what he pleased to call this doctrinaire *régime* being a different condition to what it was in 1887. If he thought that any future Unionist Government would, in their attempt to govern Ireland, be treated as the right hon. Gentleman had been treated in his attempt to govern the country by hon. Members below the Gangway and by English Members, too, he would have no hesitation in voting in favour of this Bill. But he knew well that just as the condition of Ireland in 1887 was a manufactured and artificial condition for Party and political purposes, so the present quiet condition of Ireland was a manufactured and artificial one for like purposes. [*Ironical cheers.*] He heard hon. Members below the Gangway ironically cheer that statement, but at the same time he noticed that no answer had been given to the quotation which the hon. Member for Armagh read from a speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo delivered within the past few days, and in which the hon. Member for East Mayo told them that the only reason why they were not encouraging any agitation in the country just now was because they had a friendly Government in power; but he went on to say—

> "If the Tories ever get back into power before we get Home Rule, I believe there will be one of the biggest land agitations that has ever been seen yet."

["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members said "Hear, hear!" but did that or did it not bear out his proposition that the condition of Ireland depended not upon the fact that particular laws were being administered, not upon the fact that they were going to Ireland in what had been termed a foreign garb, but upon the particular Government which happened to be in Ireland to administer those laws? If that was the case he wanted to know what stronger argument could there be for not repealing this measure, which was added to the Statute Book with great trouble in 1887? It was clear from the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo that the question of order or disorder was to depend not upon the condition of the law, or whether there was or was not Home Rule, but upon the particular Party that happened to be in power in this House. He could conceive no stronger argument in favour of the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Armagh, who asked the House to reject this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said that the reason of his success in Ireland was that he had on his side the priests and the leaders of public opinion. No doubt he had the priests upon his side to a very large extent; but what did the statement of the right hon. Gentleman prove? It was proof of the vast responsibility that rested upon the shoulders of these same priests for all the terrible times in Ireland from the year 1880 down to 1867, when his right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) took charge of the Irish Government. When the Chief Secretary told them that the country had improved, and that Clare and the darker parts were in a better condition than they had been since 1886—with which he was inclined to agree—he should like to ask what was the reason of the improvement? Were the present Land Laws different to the Land Laws of 1887? They were identically the same. Were there fewer evictions now? It had been shown that under the *régime* of the Leader of the Opposition evictions reached a lower point than they had touched for many years. Had other laws been passed? The best thing that could have happened to Ireland was that since the present Government came into power not a single Bill for Ireland had been passed. It was significant, too, in connection with the improved condition of Ireland, that the Returns of crime were least not at a time when Home Rule was granted, but in the very quarter of the year succeeding the rejection of the Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords. These facts, he contended, conclusively proved that the condition of Ireland depended not upon the laws passed by this Parliament, nor upon the fact that this Parliament was governing Ireland instead of a Home Rule Parliament, but depended solely upon what in the interest of a political Party was the best condition to have Ireland in at a particular moment. What happened in 1887? Why was the Crimes Act passed? One would think that a Conservative Government wished for and worked a Crimes Act with the greatest possible zest. ["Hear, hear!"] That was, in other words, that they wished to afford an argument so that hon. Members opposite could go down to the constituencies and abuse them, and thereby lose their seats. That was the case of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but might he remind them of this: The Unionist Government was in power a whole year before the Crimes Act was brought in at all, and why did they bring in a Crimes Act? Because hon. Members below the Gangway said that if England was able to govern Ireland without exceptional legislation, then the whole case of Home Rule would be "up," and that it must be demonstrated to the English constituencies that it was impossible for England to govern Ireland without coercive or oppressive legislation. He would quote, as appropriate to the passage of the Crimes Act of 1887, what was said by the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. J. Redmond) towards the end of 1886. The hon. Member said—

> "Mr. Gladstone told the people of England they had to choose between coercion on the one side and Home Rule on the other. Home Rule was defeated at the last Election by Great Britain, and I say advisedly that if, in place of that defeat, the Tories had been able to rule Ireland with the ordinary law, the result would have been in England and Scotland to throw back our cause, perhaps for a generation, and to give the lie direct to the prophecy of Mr. Gladstone. We have achieved a victory without breaking any law or committing a single outrage. Now is the time when outrages are fewer than they have been in the last five years. We have been able to force the Government to give up the ordinary law and to fall back once more on coercion."

He had, he submitted, demonstrated that the peace at present prevailing in Ireland was due not to any law passed by this House since the present Government came into power, and he had also demonstrated by the quotation from the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford that the Irish Nationalist Members during the year 1886, when the Unionist Government were in power, determined to make government by the ordinary law impossible, and it was in view of doing that that they manufactured such a condition of social chaos in Ireland as to render it necessary for the Government to pass the Act of 1887. The Chief Secretary, having said so much about the condition of Ireland, proceeded to give them some statistics of certain crimes under the Crimes Act and under his own *régime*. The absence of one class of crime was very remarkable—namely, the crime of boycotting.

MR. J. MORLEY: May I point out that at this moment there is only one case of partial boycotting; therefore I cannot give statistics of boycotting which does not exist.

MR. CARSON observed, that he did not at all say the right hon. Gentleman was keeping back statistics on this head. He was quite aware that since the right hon. Gentleman came into Office there had not been, so far as he knew, a single prosecution in Ireland for boycotting. That was one of the faults he was going to find with the right hon. Gentleman. It was not because there had not been boycotting in Ireland, and that of a ruinous kind too. The right hon. Gentleman told him the other day, in answer to a question, that the business of a certain miller at Kells had been, as he put it, materially interfered with, but as he (Mr. Carson) was instructed, absolutely ruined in consequence of the boycotting and denunciation to which he was subjected because he had taken an evicted farm. So far as he could see, the right hon. Gentleman did not look upon boycotting as a serious offence, and he was well aware that within the past few days the hon. Member for East Mayo went down to Nenagh in the County of Tipperary, and announced—he did not know upon what authority, but the hon. Member was looked upon as the right hon. Gentleman's guide, philosopher, and friend in Ireland—to the people that, as far as evicted farms were concerned, they might go on boycotting in the old way, and they might be perfectly certain the Government would not interfere with them. When they had a Return of statistics of crime in this House, he would ask the right hon. Gentleman were the statistics reduced because he was pleased to look upon this terrible crime of boycotting as no crime at all? He knew it had been contended that there was no illegality about boycotting. He rather thought that some hon. Members had got up in this House and had put forward boycotting not only as being no crime, but rather a merit. Those who lived in Ireland knew what boycotting was, and what it led to. It was not necessary for him to state his opinions on this point. The question of the doings of the Land League in respect of boycotting and the allegation of the harmlessness of boycotting was one of the matters inquired into and found upon by the three eminent Judges who constituted the Special Commission. The Judges had placed on record their decision on this question in the following terms:—

> "We are of opinion that the combination of which boycotting was the instrument was illegal both in its objects and the means which were adopted. The object of this elaborate and all-pervading tyranny was not only to injure the individual landlords against whom it was directed by rendering their land useless to them unless they obeyed the edicts of the Land League, but to injure the landlords as a class and drive them out of the country. . . . It was not contended before us by the respondents that actual intimidation could be justified, but it was argued that the Land League did no more than direct the force of public opinion against those whose conduct was deemed injurious to the interests of the tenants. It was, however, put before us that the action of the Land League far exceeded this limit, and that the effects of boycotting were such as might be expected to and did create a well-grounded terror in the minds of those who suffered under it, and we come to the conclusion that this was the intention of those who devised and carried out this system. It is further to be observed that though boycotting led in many cases to actual outrage, yet it was persisted in for years against the same individuals, and was generally recommended notwithstanding the evils which plainly resulted from it."

Notwithstanding that — and the right hon. Gentleman knew just as well as he did what the sanction of boycotting had been in Ireland—the hon. Member for East Mayo went down to Nenagh and told the people that under the *régime* of the present Government it was not the Government's fault if people were not boycotted according to the old ways and old methods. It was easy for the Government to reduce their statistics of crime if they passed over the crime of boycotting.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think I informed the House and the hon. and learned Gentleman that the system of classifying and reporting boycotting is exactly what it has been heretofore; therefore if I find there are no cases at the present moment except one of partial boycotting, I think I am justified in stating that.

Mr. CARSON should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman did he contend that incitement to boycotting was not a crime? Did the right hon. Gentleman read the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo? He should think that a Minister had to do something more than punish crime actually committed, and had to see that there was not a recrudescence of crime. If the right hon. Gentleman had read the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo had he taken any notice of it? So far as he could see, within the few months there had been a recrudescence of this crime of boycotting to a very alarming extent in Ireland, and he would be perfectly prepared on any day to show the right hon. Gentleman on what he based this statement. Passing away from that, he would ask were they perfectly sure that there was not going to be boycotting in future; and if they were not sure there was not going to be boycotting in future, were they going to-day to weaken the effect of the only Act on the Statute Book that would enable them to deal with it? He said, in face of the conduct of hon. Members from Ireland, and in face of their threats, it would be simply childish—unless they were prepared to say they were determined no longer to allow boycotting and to look upon it as a crime—to contend that there was any justification in the present condition of Ireland for acquiescing in the repeal of this Act of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman said that the proceedings under the first section of the Act, commonly known as the Star Chamber section, had been unsuccessful. He had something to do as a lawyer with the administation of the Crimes Act. [*Cheers.*] Hon. Members cheered that. He did not make any secret of it. It was the business of a lawyer, and particularly one holding the position of Attorney General's Counsel, to do his duty, even if he were attacked for doing so. He always thought that one of the greatest mistakes of hon. Members opposite in attacking the Crimes Act was that they did not attack the Crimes Act itself and the Members of this House who passed it, but they attacked the officials who were bound and compelled to do their duty. As regarded this first section of the Crimes Act, he believed the right hon. Gentleman was entirely wrong in saying that it was not a valuable weapon for the detection of crime. The right hon. Gentleman said that Lord Spencer, who, no doubt, had great experience in the administration of the law in Ireland, said that except in the one case of the Phœnix Park murders it never proved of any use. But was it not worth having on the Statute Book if only it served to bring to justice those miserable miscreants who were guilty of the wilful murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. As to the cases mentioned by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, these were all cases in which men were brought to trial for the most heinous offences against innocent persons. He remembered the two men who were brought to book for the murder of Quirke, and he did not believe anybody who sat in the Court and heard the piteous tale told by the widow, an old lady of 80 years of age, who saw her husband shot in her presence, would say that that case alone was not important enough to justify the retention on the Statute Book of this first section of the Act. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that he himself had instituted two inquiries under the Explosives Act since he had come into power. Yes, but he did something more. Having instituted an inquiry into the Explosives Act the right hon. Gentleman put the men on trial, on the evidence procured under that Act, on an entirely different charge, that of murder, which did not arise out of the explosion at all, and although the prosecution was not a successful one it showed how the right hon. Gentleman was anxious to have at his hand at the time some weapon to enable him to thoroughly investigate the matter, so that, if possible, the criminals might be brought to justice. The right hon. Gentleman said that these two cases under the Explosives Act failed just as under the Crimes Act. Was that a reason for abolishing the Explosives Act? Though it might fail in certain cases, the cases under this first section were only desperate cases where they could not get evidence in any other way or secure a clue to the perpetrators of crime except by holding these secret inquiries. It was exactly in the class of cases in which they would not expect to obtain any large percentage of success in eventually bringing criminals to justice, that these secret inquiries were likely to prove useful. He said it had been sufficiently successful in protecting many peasants in Ireland against the coercion of the League to justify its retention on the Statute Book. The right hon. Gentleman did not say much against the change of venue or special juries, and he rather thought he would like to keep these provisions. If the right hon. Gentleman had got up and said, as representing the Government, he would consent to the Bill, providing it was understood that the provisions as to special juries and change of venue were to be retained, he would have made an entirely different case. As regards this question of special juries and change of venue, there was a great misapprehension amongst many English people. In England, in civil cases they never saw such a thing as a person challenged at all; but in Ireland in every civil case, no matter how small, be it only for goods sold, each side challenged almost all its full numbers. The hon. and gallant Gentleman said the law was different in England and Ireland. [Colonel NOLAN: Under this Act.] The people of England and Ireland were different. They would never make the slightest progress in dealing with Ireland in looking upon Ireland in the abstract and not Ireland in the concrete. What was the reason that it had been necessary to insist so much upon this question of special juries and change of venue in Ireland? The Irish people had been educated by agitators, and sometimes so-called leaders of opinion, to disregard their oaths upon a jury case in Ireland. They had not been allowed to differ and express their opinions freely as they wished. In 1886, long after the Home Rule Bill was brought in, a Nationalist gentleman, Mr. Rolleston, wrote to *United Ireland* complaining that in a previous issue it had stated that Protestants and Catholics, if on the Nationalist side, should unite in defeating Government prosecutions. Mr. Rolleston protested against that, and asked if it was liberty that a man should not be allowed to go into the jury-box and find a verdict. Here was a note upon Mr. Rolleston's letter by the editor of *United Ireland*, who was a Member of that House—

> "In a self-governed Ireland it would, of course, be intolerable that men should not be allowed to differ freely in the jury-box and everywhere else; but, in the state of chaotic conflict to which English rule reduces us, he who is not with us is against us, and must expect to be dealt with accordingly. That is not liberty, but it is the way of winning it."

Therefore, the way they were going to win liberty in Ireland was to go into the jury box and act not according to the evidence, but according to political opinions. All he could say was that if the English people adopted similar ideas and acted upon them the present system of juries would not be tolerated in England for a moment. He would ask the Chief Secretary this: If they found the jury system did break down what were they to do? He was reading the other day a non-political essay of the right hon. Gentleman in which he made one statement which appeared to him entirely consonant with the views he was now putting forward. The statement was this—

> "It is said that the great end of the British Constitution is to get 12 honest men into a box. That is really a very sensible way of putting the theory that the first end of government is to give security of life and property, and to make people keep their contracts."

If they found they could not get twelve honest men into the box by reason of the political teaching and education they had received to disregard their oaths, then he asked, were they to give up the great end of the British Constitution and not put 12 honest men into the box at all? Let him refer to a specific case. The right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary recently to prosecute three Members of the Parnellite Party, having no doubt been advised that they had broken the law. Did the right hon. Gentleman ever think, in his calmer moments, of the kind of ridiculous farce he went through? What did the right hon. Gentleman do? These gentlemen were prosecuted in relation to certain evictions on the De Freyne estate in County Roscommon. What happened? They were tried before a jury of the very evicted tenants whose cause they had championed. ["No!"] He did not say they were all evicted tenants, but they were in that venue, and might or might not have been on the jury. The jury did not convict. He believed one juror held out, but the 11 disagreed, and the right hon. Gentleman was so convinced that it would not be worth while to further consider the case, that the Attorney General instructed the Crown Prosecutor to at once enter a *nolle prosequi*, and there was an end to the prosecution against the hon. Members. But suppose this class of cases rose in number, as they were told by the hon. Member for East Mayo they would rise in number if a Unionist Government came into power, would the right hon. Gentleman tell them that the way they were to carry on the Government of Ireland was to have a similar *fiasco* to what he had in Roscommon? Anything more absurd could hardly be conceived. The right hon. Gentleman boasted of the improvement in Ireland in dealing with crime under the ordinary law. He wanted to know, had the right hon. Gentleman convicted in a single case in Ireland under the ordinary law and without change of venue? Not one. The right hon. Gentleman called the ordinary change of venue under the Winter Assize Act the ordinary law. It was statute law, and what more was the Crimes Act than statute law? What more conclusive argument could be brought forward in favour of the change of venue than had been given by the Chief Secretary, who had stated that he had been successful in obtaining a larger number of convictions in agrarian cases in which there was a change of venue? It had long been conceded by Liberals and Conservatives alike that they never could, and never would, secure convictions in agrarian cases in Ireland before ordinary juries. Since O'Hagan's Act in 1870 there had never been a successful prosecution for agrarian crime in Ireland conducted in the ordinary venue and before an ordinary jury. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, upon the first introduction of the Home Rule Bill, said—

> "With certain exceptions in the case of winter juries it is impossible to depend in Ireland upon the finding of a jury in a case of agrarian crime according to the facts as they are viewed by the Government, by the Judges and by the public, I think, at large. That is a most serious mischief, passing down deep into the groundwork of civil society."

In face of these facts, and in face of the efficacy of these provisions, were they seriously now, on a few hours' Debate, going to pass this Bill, and not merely affirm the principle that they were against perpetual coercion, but also affirm that it was perpetual coercion to have a tribunal which would carry out the law of the land? The other sections of the Crimes Act, which provided for summary process before Magistrates, were, of course, very important. These clauses had been abused over and over again by no one more heartily than by the right hon. Gentleman. He did not blame him. It had been said that these Magistrates were Removable Magistrates. He would only say this: they might or they might not think they were a good tribunal for trying these cases, but he ventured to assert that never had a body of men more honourably or justly carried out the duties cast upon them than those Magistrates had done. The Chief Secretary, when sitting in Opposition, used to lend himself to these attacks on the Resident Magistrates. Since 1887, he had had the opportunity of dismissing any who had been guilty of misconduct, but he had never dismissed a single one of them, nor inquired into their conduct since he had been in Office, for the simple reason that they had fairly and honestly done their duty. The fact was that the whole of the outcry against Resident Magistrates in Ireland had been got up as a Party cry. It had been suggested that the Magistrates were under the thumb of Dublin Castle, but would the Chief Secretary tell the House that he had ever ventured to suggest a decision to those Magistrates, or that they had ever given a particular decision because they were afraid of being removed from their posts? Let those who cried out against the Magistrates bring before the House any particular decision which they alleged to have been wrongly given, and let the House then deal with it. Their decisions had, in fact, been brought before the superior Courts in Ireland, and the record of decisions of the Resident Magistrates which had stood this test of appeal would compare favourably with the record of decisions of any other Courts. They might think that these matters ought not to be left to the Magistrates, and that there ought to be a jury in all those cases, notwithstanding what he had pointed out; but, at all events, let them not do an injustice to the body of men like the Resident Magistrates, who had done their duty with a fairness, a sense of honour, and a sense of justice which had not been equalled by any body of public servants in the country. The object of hon. Members in bringing in this Bill was, of course, to make it impossible for any future Unionist Government to govern Ireland. That object had been boldly stated. They would make government under the ordinary law impossible, and drive the Unionist Government to come to Parliament for another Crimes Bill. But they would find that the cry of "Coercion" had grown stale after all that had gone on under the *régime* of the present Chief Secretary. If they were to have Ireland disturbed—artificially disturbed during a Unionist Government; and if they were to have Ireland quiet, artificially quiet, during a separatist Government, all he would say was that the English people had very much less intelligence than he gave them credit for, if they were not able to see the unreality of the cry of coercion. This Crimes Act had proved efficient in the past to free innocent men from the coercion of the League and its associates, and he asked the House, in the interests of the humble peasants of Ireland, to pause before they gave their sanction to a Bill which proposed to repeal such a measure.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S. said, he understood the Chief Secretary to view the Crimes Act with feelings as strong as those he entertained for any of the other political questions now under discussion. If that were so, he thought the promoters of the Bill had reason to complain that the Government should not have taken up the Bill for themselves. But now that they had adopted the Bill, the House had a right to know, not only what the Government were going to do that afternoon, but also what course they intended to pursue afterwards. If the measure were read a second time, was it to be given the facilities of a Government measure? The right hon. Gentleman said, in a rather ambiguous phrase, that he proposed to affirm the principle of the Bill. But if he affirmed the principle did he propose, if the Government continued in existence, to assist in passing the measure into law this Session? The right hon. Gentleman had also said that he was opposed to the continuance of the Crimes Act on the ground that it was an absurdity to keep on the Statute Book an Act that was operative or inoperative according to political changes at Westminster. But that was an argument that could be applied to the most recent proposal of the Government to the House on which a vote was taken the previous night—the proposal of a constitutional change which affected not only one portion of the Kingdom, but which affected the very central machinery of government, and which would be operative or inoperative according as a Conservative or Liberal Government was in power. The Chief Secretary had quoted statistics to prove a diminution of crime in Ireland, and had said that the Unionists were in the habit of charging him with that diminution as if it were an offence. He failed to recollect any Unionist Member—and certainly any Unionist Member from Ireland—who made such a charge, and he should be the last person in the world himself to make such a charge against the right hon. Gentleman. But he must remind the right hon. Gentleman that crime statistics were not taken as the foundation of the case on which the House was asked to pass the measure in 1887. The Leader of the Opposition stated, when as Chief Secretary for Ireland he introduced the Crimes Act, that he did not rely upon statistics of crime as the basis of his policy; but on the principle which had been laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, that it was necessary to consider the amount of crime in Ireland in conjunction with its source and character; and on that ground it was useless for anyone to urge that there was not ample reason for retaining the Act on the Statute Book. When the hon. Member for East Mayo prided himself on having paralysed the operation of the law in East Mayo, and stated that he would do the same thing again under another Unionist Government, what was the value of any number of statistics of crime as an argument for the removal of the Act from the Statute Book? The Chief Secretary had said that he governed Ireland with the aid of the Bishops and popular politicians. But a Government might come into power in a very short time that would not go cap in hand to Archbishop Walsh: and it would be absurd for such a Government to place themselves in a position in which they could not rely on the assistance of a measure which had proved so effective in freeing Ireland from those crimes, which for Party purposes were perpetrated in the time of the late Unionist Government. The right hon. Gentleman prided himself on the fact that they had governed Ireland with the ordinary law, and without the aid of the Crimes Act. It was easy for the Chief Secretary to boast in the House that he was not a coercionist, because he did not use the Crimes Act. But from the Irish point of view he was still governing Ireland by brute force, because he was using, when he thought necessary, all those administrative instruments for preserving peace and order which the Leader of the Opposition had been denounced for using. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman, who boasted that he was a non-coercionist, had been denounced by the followers of the hon. Member for East Clare—who had spoken that day in such whispered humbleness—as one of the worst coercionists that ever went to Ireland. The hon. Member for East Clare had told them that to be arrested under this Act was to have established a claim on the gratitude of the Irish nation. Indeed, if they were to vote for the repeal of the Act they should be removing from the path of young ambitious Irishmen the easiest method for obtaining political distinction ; for a man had only to be prosecuted by the Government under the Coercion Act to become a public hero. Therefore, the repeal of this Act would deprive Irish Members of the easiest way of obtaining a crown of glory, a crown, however, which was not free from thorns. The hon. Member for East Clare had found that out for himself when he was imprisoned in Wexford, and put on prison fare. It was not surprising that the constitution of the hon. Member for East Clare broke down on water. In fact, no Irish constitution could stand bread and water for 72 hours.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Talk sense.

Mr. MACARTNEY said, that there was practically no grievance in the continuance of this Act on the Statute Book. If there was any grievance at all it was a mere sentimental grievance, that had been greatly exaggerated. The Crimes Act did not hurt any Irishman, whether he dwelt in his constituency (South Antrim) or in the constituency of the hon. Member for East Clare. The hon. Member objected to the Act because it was confined to Ireland, and the Chief Secretary had said it would be impossible to carry it for England ; but if the state of things existed in England which existed in Ireland when the Act was passed, a Government that did not cope with it would be swept away at once. In America, under similar circumstances, the people did not wait for legislation, but adopted summary measures. In the case of the Kearney riots, the people of California did not wait for any Government action, but took the matter into their own hands and dealt out justice to Kearney and his followers. The hon. Member for East Clare had also contended that the Act had failed, because he said he had not been converted by being sent to gaol. Of course, the enforcement of the Act did not change the views of those who suffered under it, as the hon. Member appeared to think it should. They did not change the opinions of a thief by sending him to gaol, for it was a well-known fact that the gaols were largely filled by old criminals.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I know nothing about thieves; I suppose you do.

Mr. MACARTNEY said that, of course, he was arguing generally, and without any personal reference to the hon. Member. He looked upon the hon. Member not as an ordinary but as an extraordinary burglar, who regarded it as meritorious to have been put in prison. As they could not convince a thief, so they could not convince a political burglar. At all events, the hon. Member had been kept out of mischief for six months, and if no other good was done, they would have to thank the operation of the Act for that very small mercy. The promoters of the Bill ought to have gone a step further than they had done. They should have shown that not only was the Act not necessary now, but that in no possible future circumstances, whether remote or near, would such an instrument for procuring the punishment of those who broke the law in Ireland be necessary. The supporters of the Bill, including the Chief Secretary, had carefully abstained from noticing the suggestion that it was possible there might be a recrudescence of crime in Ireland which would call for exceptional legislation. It had not only been admitted but suggested that in the near future it might be possible that the hon. Member for East Mayo and his friends would attempt, for political purposes of their own, to create in the districts of Ireland in which they had influence those agrarian circumstances which had led in the past to so much crime. The Chief Secretary had not attempted to deal with that point ; and he certainly could not admit that the right hon. Gentleman had made out the slightest justification for the action he proposed to take in voting for the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I have often reflected how curious is our procedure in this House with reference to those ambitious schemes for legislation which private Members in the exercise of their undoubted rights bring forward for discussion on a Wednesday afternoon. The Government of the day may bring forward measures even of the second class, not specially controversial or important, and the Forms of the House secure that such measures shall be adequately discussed at every stage, not only on the Second Reading, and on the different later stages, but on the First Reading also. These are the safeguards to prevent rash legislation on the part of the Government, but they are not thought necessary in the case of the irresponsible private Member, who introduces a Bill without anyone objecting and obtains a First Reading. Yesterday there was introduced three such Bills—one to abolish the House of Lords; a second to abolish the Universities; and a third to abolish—I forget what, but I think it was to abolish one of the other ancient institutions of the country. Nobody said a word, and if the introducer of any of these Bills can get the first place on a Wednesday he may occupy four or five hours of the valuable time of the House, and obtain a decision of the House on the main principle involved. If that procedure lends itself to criticism there has never been an occasion on which criticism would have been more appropriate than it is to-day. Think of what we are asked to do, and of the conditions under which we are asked to do it. We are asked to repeal an Act, and the Members who ask us to do so, although they made long and interesting speeches, did not go to the root of the matter and discuss the principles and details which the Act involves. One half the speech of the Seconder was devoted to autobiographical experiences of prison life and views of prison discipline. Is it conceivable that the House is to take seriously such a proposal when it is laid before us in a spirit so wanting in seriousness? When I turn to the conditions under which the measure is brought before us it appears to me that the case against asking the House to decide a question of this kind on a Wednesday afternoon becomes absolutely overwhelming. As has already been pointed out by my hon. and learned Friend who moved the rejection of the Bill, the Crimes Act took three months and seven days in passing through this House, and even that was not thought sufficient time by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Yet that which took three months and seven days to pass this House we are asked to deal with in its most important stage in four-and-a-half-hours. With regard to the Chief Secretary's reply to that point, I absolutely deny, in the first place, that this measure can be properly dealt with unless you have details before you. If there is a stage at which principle, and principle alone, is supposed to guide the action of the House of Commons, it is that of First Reading. Yet the First Reading of the Act which this Bill is intended to repeal took four nights, and the Second Reading took seven nights. In these circumstances, I must enter my protest against such an invasion of the rights of private Members as would require this House to come to any decision upon so momentous a case as this within the brief space allotted to us on a Wednesday afternoon. The Chief Secretary admitted that to govern Ireland successfully you require a strong Government, but he seemed to think that a strong Government was able to do all the work without anything in the nature of special provisions for enforcing the ordinary Criminal Law of the country. I listened with interest to see how he was going to defend and develop that position, but not one single administrative action did he put before us which could be adopted by the strong Government in question except the system of energetic control. But the value of that system depends upon the legal machinery by which criminals can be brought to justice when they are caught. What is the use of control? It is to prevent those committing crimes who are afraid of being caught and to catch those who have already committed crimes; but why should any human being be deterred from committing any crime he pleases if he happens to know he will not be brought to justice for the crime? Control is an admirable additional help to a system by which criminals can be tried and convicted; but if for any reason, political or other, it is not backed up by adequate legal machinery, no amount of control in the world will give that security to Her Majesty's subjects which everyone has a right to demand. The right hon. Gentleman's argument seemed to be reducible to one solitary proposition, and that was that he, without the Crimes Act, had got on exceedingly well with the administration of Ireland. I have never contested the facts of the right hon. Gentleman, but I do contest the validity of the argument which he rests upon them. We have over and over again pointed out that you cannot judge of the efficacy of your legal system by itself; you must judge it in comparison with the forces to which it is opposed. Now, we contend that under certain special circumstances at the present hour the forces arrayed against legal authority in Ireland are far weaker than they were under the *régime* of those who preceded the right hon. Gentleman. Great political and social organisations, which in other times were used for the promotion of disorder and, indirectly at all events, for the promotion of crime, have now been used in order to support the Government, from which they have expectations in the future. "But," says the right hon. Gentleman, "is this a thing of which we need be ashamed? Ought you not to govern in sympathy with the moral forces of the community?" Well, I will not discuss whether the forces of which he speaks can properly be described as moral, or how far they are moral, but what is the origin and basis of the present alliance with forces which he describes as moral? Is it sympathy with the mode of administration which he has thought it his duty to use in Ireland? No; we have irrefragable proof that it is not sympathy with the administrative methods of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has done, and has been obliged to do, everything in an administrative sense which his predecessors did. The basis, therefore, of this alliance is not common agreement as to how Ireland should be governed at present. What is it? It is the hope of some Bill in the future which is to remove the whole responsibility of governing Ireland on any principle from gentlemen sitting on the Treasury Bench. I do not call that an alliance with the moral forces of Ireland. I call it an alliance for a definite political object, entered into by gentlemen with a definite political end, and it no more deserves the flattering epithets he applies to it than any other combination of persons of very different principles, and having very different objects, to carry out a temporary purpose. If that analysis of the present situation be true, what element of permanence has it? Assume that a Unionist Government comes in, then this alliance with the moral forces of Ireland must on the hypothesis vanish. I do not think it is even necessary to wait for the advent of a Unionist Government. Once let the Liberal Party in this country come round to the late views of the present Prime Minister, and the alliance again will vanish. Is it not unreasonable and intolerable to ask us to abandon a method of enforcing the Common Law of this country, which, by the admission of the advocates of the present law, will become necessary as soon as Irish patriots see the prospects of Home Rule receding into space? I am certain that must come sooner or later, and then we will find ourselves face to face with the old problems and difficulties, but without the present methods of meeting them when they arrive. The right hon. Gentleman told us that by retaining this Act as a permanent part of the Statute Book we were taking it for granted that Ireland would for an indefinite period take a view of the law different to the view which prevails in this country. I have never believed myself that the ancient traditions of agrarian disturbance, which did not begin with the Union, could be wholly got rid of in a generation or in two generations. But I will make this concession to the right hon. Gentleman. I believe that, in spite of this inherited perversion of view with regard to agrarian crime in Ireland, you could govern Ireland under the ordinary law of this country on one condition, and that condition is that you could guarantee that no political Party would every again use crime for the purpose of advancing their political views. The right hon. Gentleman must know perfectly well, if he had the courage to tell us his whole mind, that political Parties in the past used crime, directly or indirectly, to further their ends, and that at this moment they are threatening to use crime again. We had two quotations this afternoon from one Member of the largest of the Irish sections below the Gangway. One of these quotations encouraged boycotting, and stated that the Government, of which the speaker was a supporter, would never punish boycotting. The other said that as soon as a Unionist Government came into Office a land agitation such as had never been known in Ireland before would be got up by political agitators. A land agitation means agrarian crime, and it means nothing else but agrarian crime, and I wish to know how any responsible politician in this House, with that menace staring him in the face, with the knowledge that those with whom he is in moral alliance at this moment may, as soon as a change of Government takes place, resume all the old methods for all the old purposes with all the old results—I wish to know how any responsible politician in these circumstances can say that the Government of this country is to be left defenceless and powerless, deprived of every method by which the criminal can be pursued, and that these gentlemen are to be left to pursue their own course at their own sweet will. The right hon. Gentleman may be fortunate enough during the remaining portion of his Irish career to be able to guarantee that these moral forces shall be on his side. But when the moral forces become immoral forces when he leave Office, when different political objects are to be gained at Westminster and different political methods have to be pursued in Ireland, then a condition of things may arise again under which we shall have, for the very purpose of conferring the most elementary rights and liberties upon the poorer peasantry, to have recourse to instruments to carry out the ordinary law which nobody likes to employ. I and those who act with me are supposed to have some special love for coercive legislation and coercive practices. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing would be more in accordance with the passionate desire of those who sit upon this side as well as of those who sit upon that side than that Ireland should in every respect—in her love for law as well as in other respects—be in precisely the same position as every other part of the Kingdom. But because we desire that, are we to shut our eyes to the plain teaching of facts, and are we to say that, because during a year and-a-half it has suited certain politicians to support a Government which they formerly opposed, to make that easy which they formerly made difficult—are we to say for that reason that for the future the Administration is to be rendered perfectly helpless in the face even of the most outrageous attempts to produce crime and disorder in the South and West of Ireland? I cannot believe that the House of Commons will come to a decision of that kind; and of this I am certain—that if they mean to come to a decision of that kind it should only be after the fullest debate and the maturest consideration, and not after the perfunctory discussion on this extraordinary proposal which is all we have been vouchsafed this afternoon by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 255; Noes 196.—(Division List, No. 27.)

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 254; Noes 194.—(Division List, No. 28.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Friday, at Two of the clock.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.—(No. 148.)

Read a second time, and committed.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL.
(No. 96.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

MUSIC AND DANCING LICENCES (MIDDLESEX) BILL.—(No. 26.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.
(No. 97.)

As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) EXTENSION OF POWERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Buchanan, Bill to extend the powers of the Fishery Board for Scotland in relation to harbours and piers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Asher, Mr. Anstruther, Sir Donald Macfarlane, Mr. Renshaw, and Sir William Wedderburn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 174.]

QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY.

Copy presented,—of Annual Report and Accounts of the Governors for the year ended 31st December 1893 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 (EVICTION NOTICES),

Copy presented,—of Return of Eviction Notices filed during the quarter ended 31st March 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 13th April, 1894, declaring that Thomas Lewis (Sub-postmaster, Little Sutton, Chester) was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

AFRICA (No. 3, 1894).

Copy presented,—of Map of the Southern Portion of British East Africa (to illustrate Africa, No. 2, 1894 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Pier and Harbour Orders (No. 1) Bill."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 80.)

ESTATE DUTY.

Copy ordered, "of Paper explanatory to the proposals of The Chancellor of the Exchequer with respect to the Estate Duty."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 79.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Sir, on the question of the Adjournment, would the right hon. Gentleman inform us what it is proposed should be the course of business to-morrow? I do not know how long the discussion of the Board of Conciliation and Railway Rates Bills will occupy, but it may be important to know the course of business.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS said, that the Bills mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman would be the second and third Orders of the Day to-morrow.

House adjourned at one minute before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 19th April 1894.

THE "COSTA RICA PACKET."

PETITION PRESENTED.

*The Earl of JERSEY: My Lords, I beg to present a Petition from the owner, master, and members of the crew of the British whaling ship *Costa Rica Packet*, and I would ask to be allowed to say a few words to explain the reason this Petition is presented. Captain Carpenter, the master of the *Costa Rica Packet*, is a British subject residing in Sydney, and has had great experience in whaling expeditions. On November 1, 1891, while on a whaling expedition, he was arrested by the Netherlands (India) Authorities for an offence alleged to have been committed in the beginning of 1888. Without being told the specific nature of the charge made against him, he was taken off a distance of 1,000 miles to Macassar, there put into a cell, labelled "For Condemned Europeans," and was most vilely treated. Owing apparently to the action of the Governor of the Straits Settlements he was eventually released, on the 28th of November, without the case being tried, or, in other words, because there was no real case against him. I may mention that while he was at Macassar there was only one other British subject there, Mr. Barnard, without whose assistance his case would have been probably still harder. In the meantime the opportunity of fishing was lost, as the whaling season had passed away, and the expedition proved a total failure. Under these circumstances the owner, the captain, and the crew of the *Costa Rica Packet* made a demand upon the Netherlands (India) Government for some compensation for the loss sustained owing to those proceedings. Apparently that just compensation has not been recognised as due by the Netherlands Government. It appears that the arrest of Captain Carpenter was not based upon reasonable grounds, and the course taken of arresting him and refusing to accept his bail can hardly be defended. Even the Dutch Procureur General when he made his Report of June 15th, 1892, said—

> "It is true that the officer of justice at Macassar instead of asking for liberty to prosecute the order of arrest had adopted a different course, and I pointed out in my letter of the 15th January, 1891, the difficulty of proving the case, but the Council by its decision showed that it considered the arrest necessary."

Well, as was foreseen, the case could not be proved, and the Dutch Government now refuses compensation for an arrest which their own legal adviser had warned them not to make. This matter, my Lords, has created a somewhat lively interest in Australia, and the Legislative Council of New South Wales appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the matter, and I believe its Report has been widely distributed in this country. Personally, I knew Captain Carpenter, and I know he bore a high reputation, both for good character and knowledge of nautical affairs. In fact, I happened to go on board the *Costa Rica Packet* the day it started on this unfortunate voyage. When we consider what a serious blow it would be to British interests, and how it would affect British traders in Dutch ports if an outrage of this kind is allowed to pass by without notice being taken of it, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the Colonial Governments should take some steps about it; and I may say that the Premier of New South Wales (Sir George Dibbs) has frequently urged me upon the matter. But the matter is not one only of colonial interest, it is of Imperial interest; and the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs recognised this when the case was laid before him. After consideration he sent a Despatch to our Minister at the Hague in these words—

> "With all respect to the procedure of the Court of the Netherlands (India), Her Majesty's Government consider that the evidence was not sufficient to make out such a case even of reasonable suspicion as could be treated as justifying the arrest of Mr. Carpenter, and Her Majesty's Government are, therefore, of opinion that in the absence of such reasonable evidence Mr. Carpenter is entitled to compensation for personal damage. After carefully considering the case, they feel justified in asking the Netherlands Government to grant to Mr. Carpenter, by way of personal compensation, the sum of £2,500. Her Majesty's Government wish to keep the claims arising from the arrest within the narrowest possible limits, and they will not, therefore, put in any claim on account of the loss suffered by the members of the crew of the *Costa Rica Packet*."

It is not, my Lords, for me to put my opinion against that of the Law Officers of the Crown, but it does seem hard that the captain and crew of this vessel, who have suffered great losses, should not be considered. It must be remembered that they were working this expedition upon the "lay" principle, and they had reason to expect they would get some remuneration for their efforts, but as it turned out the expedition proved a dead loss, and they got neither wages nor profit. It would not be reasonable to expect Her Majesty's Government to act against the advice of their Law Officers, and of course I cannot press that portion of the Petition. As I believe Her Majesty's Government is fully aware of the great importance of this matter, and they have done what they could up to the present time, I need not dilate upon how very great in fact, how vital in fact, is the importance of protecting the freedom of our subjects in every corner of the world, and to prevent our flag being insulted by any other nation. Perhaps the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs may remind me of the old adage, that "One man may take a horse to the water but that ten cannot make him drink," and that several representations have been made to the Dutch Government about granting the compensation which would be adequate in this case. No doubt it is also true that the fault alleged against the Dutch has never been that of giving too much; but still it is not the act of a friendly or honourable Government to refuse to give compensation to the subject of another country whom it has arrested upon a charge which it could not sustain and whom it has greatly outraged. I hope, therefore, the noble Lord will allow me to express the wish that he will continue his efforts in order to bring about a speedy arrangement of this matter. It has been pending for some years now, and I think it is high time that some compensation should be paid to Captain Carpenter for the injury he has sustained, and that also some reparation or apology should be made for the insult to our flag.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): My Lords, the noble Earl has stated very clearly the details of this case, and I dare say he will excuse me for not following him now in the various remarks he has made upon it. The matter being still under discussion with the Netherlands Government, I do not think it would be desirable that I should go into all the particulars of the case. But I am able to give so far a satisfactory answer to the noble Earl in assuring him that we by no means have acquiesced in the refusal of the Netherlands Government to make compensation to Captain Carpenter, whom we consider to have been unjustly used, and I am about to address immediately another Despatch to our Minister at the Hague instructing him to strongly press upon the Netherlands Government the necessity of doing justice in the matter and giving compensation to Captain Carpenter. I will only add that I can hardly believe that those representations will not be successful, because I believe that in Captain Carpenter's case there has been real hardship and a real reason for claiming that compensation is owing to him.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 24.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD SANDHURST said, in moving the Second Reading, that there were few Amendments or alterations made in it as compared with former Army Acts. One of them related to an alteration of date and another to the alteration of a word. But there was one Amendment which made an alteration in procedure with regard to District Courts Martial. Noble and gallant Lords and other noble Lords who took an interest in the subject were aware that at present at a District Court Martial a prisoner might be attended and assisted by a friend, who might be a barrister or solicitor. The procedure was that the friend might not put questions himself to the prosecutor, but that the prisoner himself should put the questions suggested to him by the friend. By the proposed Amendment it was suggested that the practice which now applied in General Courts Martial should be extended to District Courts Martial, and that the friend should put the questions, and, in the event of a barrister or solicitor being employed, the prosecution would have the like privilege. He did not say that any injustice had occurred, but the Amendment would remove any possible suspicion of injustice, and it carried out a promise made by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman in the other House last year. The fourth Amendment was merely intended to bring the Army (Annual) Act into line with that for protection of persons passed in 1893, and would be merely an alteration of "12" into "6 months" in section 170.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Sandhurst.*)

Viscount CROSS: My Lords, I cannot allow the statement of the noble Lord to go forth without expressing one word of strongest approval of the change as to the procedure at Courts Martial. Noble Lords will ask why I interest myself in this subject; but I was consulted upon it by the War Office, and I have always held that it is necessary, in justice to an accused person, this power should be given whereby he may be defended by counsel or a solicitor if he thinks fit at District as at General Courts Martial.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly; Then Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and dispensed with; Bill read 3^a, and passed.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (PROCEDURE) BILL.—(No. 3.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

Clause 1.

Lord HALSBURY: My Lords, at line 10, I propose to leave out the words "of a Judge." The effect of the Amendment is this. By the Bill as it was drawn, an appeal might be allowed by the order of a Judge, or by the order of a Judge of the Court of Appeal. It seems to me that is introducing a new precedent and a very inconvenient one. It ought to be by the leave of the Court of Appeal or not at all, because by the hypothesis of one Judge being mentioned, though the other two Judges of the Court were opposed to an appeal, yet the permission of one Judge would allow an appeal. It seems to me that is a novelty and an extremely inconvenient thing to do, and I beg to propose that Amendment.

Amendment moved, in line 10, to leave out the words "of a Judge."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee; and to be printed, as amended. (No. 26.)

EDUCATION CODE, 1894.

RESOLUTION.

*Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY called attention to the Education Code of 1894, and moved to resolve—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the following paragraphs of Article 73, namely:—'In order that a school may be properly organised, the number of children on the registers under the control of any teacher or teachers should not exceed by more than 15 per cent. the number for which such teacher' or teachers is or are considered to be sufficient. 'In the case of schools to which the grant falls due on or after 31st August, 1896, the above numbers will be reduced as follows: 60 to 50, 70 to 60, and 50 to 45,' should be omitted from the Code."

He said, he expected to have had to thank the President, the Vice President, and the Education Department, according to what had been said on Tuesday last, for a complete modification of the addition to the Code, and he did thank them for the concession they had made in respect of the average attendances. The country, too, would thank them for it. But they had been led to expect that the further demands of the Education Office would be made merely as a counsel of perfection. Perhaps Lord Playfair would explain why there was no modification in the Article with regard to what was to take place at present. Alterations had been made in the Code as late as 1890, reducing 80 to 70, and it was now proposed to reduce it to 60. He asked leave to read to the House an extract from a letter he had received, which was much more clear upon the subject than the Papers which were circulated from

London. It was from Dr. Beach, Head Master of Christchurch School, Macclesfield, dated April 18.

> "Article 73 will drive all pupil teachers from voluntary schools whose average attendance is between 200 and 300, because they will therein be unable to take any class, and this species of schools cannot afford supernumeraries. At the same time, it will give little or no relief to the most burdened class of teachers—namely, those in small schools, where a teacher has all, or nearly all, the classes to herself or himself. The abuse of very large classes is mostly felt under the London School Board through uneven distribution of its staff. But the addition to Article 73 goes so far beyond and yet falls so short of what is required that I cannot conceive it to be anything else but a pretext to injure voluntary schools. All that is required to prevent abuse is already in existence under the 1893 Code. In this the minimum staff is laid down, and if this is unduly apportioned between class and class, then Her Majesty's Inspector at his visits should censure the organisation. There is no security in any amendment of the addition; it should be deleted altogether. I hear something about the words 'habitual attendance' being substituted for 'No. on Registers.' The improvement thus effected, the degree of hardship thus lessened, will be infinitesimal. Where the staff is adequate, if a pupil teacher or even an assistant be somewhat apparently overburdened, the Head Master, like a skilful general paying attention to the weakest points, comes himself or detaches temporarily some other teacher to assist. You will see that in my paper I touch upon other Articles of the New Code, which are not in the abstract objectionable, but in the concrete are ruinous, unless Mr. Acland will first find the managers more money and the teachers more time. In Macclesfield, on account of the New Code, I see nothing but the capture by Boardism of one of the strongest voluntary fortresses and the secession of several schools."

The writer of that letter was much more than an elementary teacher — he was Head Master of a large school, and had had great experience. In a Paper about to be published he stated that Macclesfield would have to pay £1,200, Congleton £1,500, and the whole diocese of Chester about £29,000. That was only for structural alterations, and that was the reason he had asked for a Return of all the schools which had been called upon to make alterations. A notice could then be put in the Press, and all school managers could send in the amounts they had expended. The country would in that way see what these structural alterations had cost. That would form a good ground for applying for further forbearance; and for not proposing to alter the arrangements with regard to staff, which would press still more heavily on voluntary schools. If the Register of the Education Office were kept in anything like good order, as the Foreign Office Registers were kept, there ought to be no difficulty in making the Return. It was difficult to obtain the figures with regard to population grants from the Blue Books. He had been referred to one of the half-yearly Reports, and had found it impossible to arrive at any result. No doubt the officials at the Department could tell what had happened, because they had previous Reports to refer to. He hoped the noble Lord would be able to give a sufficient explanation to make the Motion unnecessary. Moreover, less than 30 Peers were present, and a Division could not be taken.

Moved to resolve—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the following paragraphs of Article 73, viz.:—'In order that a school may be properly organised, the number of children on the registers under the control of any teacher or teachers should not exceed by more than 15 per cent. the number for which such teacher or teachers is or are considered to be sufficient.' 'In the case of schools to which the grant falls due on or after 31st August, 1896, the above numbers will be reduced as follows: 60 to 50, 70 to 60, and 50 to 45,' should be omitted from the Code."—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

***Lord PLAYFAIR**: My Lords, I am sure the noble Lord will excuse me if I do not follow him in regard to the question of structural alterations, which is quite outside the question now before your Lordships. The question he deals with in the first part of his speech is as to what is a sufficient number of pupils for a single teacher. The Education Department has found by experience that a single teacher cannot with efficiency teach 60 boys, and they therefore want to give notice that, not now, but in the course of a couple of years, the subject would become one for the serious attention of teachers and managers of schools. Under the Minute as it was first drawn and laid upon the Table of both Houses I confess there was a considerable hardship, as it referred to the intended changes as applying to the children on the Registers. But it is felt that between the number on the school Registers and the number in average attendance there is often a wide divergence, and if it had been left without amendment it would have fallen heavily on the schools, because the managers would have had to get rid of children who attended irregularly, and the children as well as the masters would have suffered. The Minute has been altered so as to be merely an intimation to school managers that a certain proportion of pupils to teachers is necessary to secure efficiency. The Registers are not the condition now, though the attendance is as usual, and it is altered from "average attendance" to "habitual attendance." It stands now—

> "In order that a school may be properly organised it should be arranged that the number of children habitually present at any time under the instruction of any teacher or teachers should not exceed by more than 15 per cent. the number for which such teacher or teachers is or are considered to be sufficient."

This, it will be seen, is not mandatory, but recommendatory. It has, however, been considered right to intimate to schools throughout the country that the number now allowed for a single teacher is in excess of what he can properly manage, and that two years hence that number is intended to be reduced. In the meantime, the whole question can be discussed, and the Government and the House can be informed whether the requirements of the Department are justifiable. In 1896 will come the time to decide whether the Department has taken too high a view, or whether their views as to the number of scholars are moderate. I hope, in these circumstances, that the Motion will not be pressed by the noble Lord, as the Return would only refer to the Minute which has been cancelled.

THE EARL OF CRANBROOK: My Lords, after the statement of the noble Lord, it is quite clear that the question is left open for consideration of the country. What appears in the Code is, in the first place, only a recommendation, and, in the next place, a sort of prediction which may never be fulfilled, and which the country will have ample opportunity of considering during the next two years. That being so, it appears to me it would be premature to take steps upon the question. We are yet without information, for the Code has not been long in our hands. I therefore strongly recommend my noble Friend not to press his Motion.

EARL STANHOPE said, he hoped the statement of the noble Earl representing the Education Department would be, as far as it went, regarded as satisfactory. He only rose for an instant to ask what was meant by the rather vague phrase "habitual attendance," which had been substituted for average attendance on the Register. There was a great difference between the two, and as the former was rather a vague term he would be glad of an explanation.

*LORD PLAYFAIR: The expression "habitual" probably means average attendance, but it has been put in as a general expression to show the country that the notice was really recommendatory, and that at present there was nothing mandatory about it, though in a couple of years' time the Department may be compelled to fix a smaller number per teacher than is the habit at present.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

BEHRING SEA AWARD BILL.

Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 27.)

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT, 1893, AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 28.)

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve as Chairmen of the Standing Committee:

L. Chancellor.
E. Cadogan.
E. Belmore.
E. Morley.
E. Camperdown.
E. Kimberley.
E. Northbrook.
V. Cross.
L. Balfour of Burley.
L. Halsbury.

And that the Committee have nominated the following Lords to serve on the Standing Committee:

L. Archbishop of Canterbury.
L. Chancellor.
L. Archbishop of York.
L. Rosebery (*E. Rosebery*). (*L. President*).
L. Tweedmouth. (*L. Privy Seal.*)
D. Saint Albans.
D. Bedford.
D. Devonshire.
D. Rutland.
M. Breadalbane. (*L. Steward.*)
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
M. Ripon.
E. Denbigh.
E. Stamford.
E. Winchilsea and Nottingham.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Carnwath.
E. Dundonald.
E. Stanhope.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Spencer.
E. Mount-Edgcumbe.
E. Cadogan.
E. Malmesbury.
E. Lucan.
E. Belmore.
E. Onslow.
E. Morley.
E. Camperdown.
E. Yarborough.
E. Dudley.
E. Kimberley.
E. Ravensworth.
E. Wharncliffe.
E. Northbrook.
E. Lathom.
E. Selborne.
E. Cranbrook.
E. Ancaster.
V. Sidmouth.
V. Cross.
L. Bp. London.
L. Bp. Durham.
L. Bp. Winchester.
L. Bp. Llandaff.
L. Bp. Ely.
L. Bp. Manchester.
L. Carrington. (*L. Chamberlain.*)
L. Clinton.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Windsor.
L. Teynham.
L. Clifford of Chudleigh.
L. Barnard.
L. Sinclair.
L. Balfour of Burley.
L. Boyle (*E. Cork and Orrery.*)
L. Lyttleton.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Meldrum. (*M. Huntly.*)
L. Foxford. (*E. Limerick.*)
L. Churchill.
L. Colchester.
L. Ker. (*M. Lothian.*)
L. Poltimore.
L. Belper.
L. Hartismere. (*L. Henniker.*)
L. Lawrence.
L. Acton.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Norton.
L. Shute. (*V. Barrington.*)
L. Watson.
L. Lamington.
L. Rowton.
L. Ampthill.
L. Reay.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. de Vesci. (*V. de Vesci.*)
L. Halsbury.
L. Northington. (*L. Henley.*)
L. Monkswell.
L. Lingen.
L. Ashbourne.
L. Hillingdon.
L. Grimthorpe.
L. Kensington.
L. Thring.
L. Stanley of Preston.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Basing.
L. Cheylesmore.
L. Knutsford.
L. Iveagh.
L. Rookwood.
L. Shand.
L. Ashcombe.
L. Playfair.
L. Swansea.
L. Farrer.
L. Hawkesbury.

Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at five minutes before
Five o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 19th April 1894.

A CORRECTION.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) called attention to an error in the Official Division List. He stated that, although he voted in the second Division on the previous afternoon, his name did not appear in the Official List.

*MR. SPEAKER said, he would call attention to the omission, and take care that the necessary correction was made.

QUESTIONS.

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, in the United Kingdom, the number of accidents reported monthly by certifying surgeons in factories and workshops averages 700, in mines nearly 300, and on railways upwards of 200; whether he is also aware that serious results frequently occur from shock to the system and loss of blood before the arrival of surgical assistance; and whether, by the cöoperation of the Inspectors of Factories, Mines, and Railways, and the Education Department, it is practicable to extend a knowledge of first aids to the injured among managers, superintendents, and foremen, so as to diminish the proportion of deaths, and alleviate the sufferings of the injured?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds.) (who replied) said: The figures given by my hon. Friend are, I am informed, fairly correct. I am well aware of the results which so frequently occur in these cases. Much is done by Ambulance Associations, and the Education Department approves of lectures being given on this subject in continuation schools. As to whether it is possible to take any further steps in this matter, the question will receive careful attention.

POSTAL TELEGRAPH REVENUE.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the facts that the total deficiency of Telegraph Revenue to meet expenditure and interest amounted to £4,929,257 up to the 31st of March, 1893, that the deficiency for the year ending on that date was £465,570, and appeared to be rapidly rising, he can explain the reason for this grave state of things; whether his attention has been drawn to the paragraph, page 6, of the Report from the Select Committee of 1888, as to the causes then operating to make Post Office Telegraphs unprofitable; and what steps have been since taken to deal with those causes?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): In addition to the reasons given in the paragraph of the Report of the Select Committee of 1888 quoted by my hon. Friend, which still operates to a great extent to cause the deficiency, I may state that there has been a general improvement in the wages of the telegraphists, trade has been much depressed, and there has also been the competition of telephones. As I have stated on a previous occasion, steps have been taken, with the concurrence of the Directors, to limit the services performed gratuitously for certain Railway Companies, and negotiations are proceeding with the remaining Companies. Economies in the service have been effected where possible, but no change has been made in the tariff under which news messages are sent, and there is no doubt that the loss from this cause is largely increasing. On this point I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to a question on the 27th of November last. The House is also aware that, if interest on capital expenditure be taken into account, nothing approaching to an equilibrium between telegraph revenue and expenditure has been attained since the decision was taken to prepare for the introduction of 6d. telegrams.

*MR. J. E. ELLIS: I presume we may rely upon my right hon. Friend doing his utmost to bring this system of gratuitous service for the Companies to an end?

MR. A. MORLEY: I have taken all the steps in my power. I am still in negotiation with some of the Companies, and hope soon to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

HERTFORDSHIRE CLERKS OF THE PEACE.

MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the amount of salary and what of fees annually received by the Clerk of the Peace for the County of Herts; what part of that sum is payable out of the rates; and by whom and when was he appointed?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: The Clerk of the Peace informs me that his salary, which was fixed in 1875, is £950. That the gross amount of fees received during the past year, which were somewhat in excess of the usual amount, was £266. That of this sum £109 was payable out of the rates. That he was appointed in 1865 by the Earl of Verulam, the then Lord Lieutenant of the County.

SITTINGS OF THE HIGH COURT AT GUILDHALL.

MR. GREENE (Shrewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Lord Chancellor would ascertain the opinion of the Judges and of the legal profession whether the sittings of the High Court of Justice at Guildhall have been found sufficiently advantageous to justify the continued withdrawal of Judges from the Royal Courts for the purpose; and will the Government take steps to give effect thereto?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: The Lord Chancellor is aware that many of the Judges are of opinion that the experiment which has been tried of having sittings for London causes at the Guildhall has not been successful, and that this view finds considerable support in the legal profession. He hopes that arrangements are now in progress, pursuant to the recommendations of the Council of Judges, for definite and continuous sittings of an adequate number of Courts at the Royal Courts of Justice, with satisfactory provision for taking a list of commercial causes, which will render it necessary to continue the Guildhall sittings.

THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY BILL.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the attention of the Treasury has been drawn to the Bill now before Parliament intituled "The Southern Railway Bill"; whether, under the agreement proposed to be confirmed by the Bill, the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland have agreed to the payment to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company of the perpetual rent of £917 a year as receivers over the Southern Railway for the right to run over one and a-quarter miles of the former Company's line into Thurles, and as rent for Thurles Railway Station; could the Government construct a new line into Thurles with a station there for a smaller amount than that represented by the capital value cf this annual sum; and whether he is aware that the effect of the agreement will be to secure for ever to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company the power to send by Dublin all cross-channel traffic not specially consigned by Waterford?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham): A Select Committee of the House will shortly consider the Bill referred to, and will, no doubt, hear all parties concerned. It would, therefore, be inconvenient that I should make any statement at the present time in anticipation of the proceedings before the Committee.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN DUNSHAUGHLIN UNION.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will he explain why, although a Local Government inquiry into the erection of labourers' cottages in Dunshaughlin Union was held early in December last, and nearly all the representations were sanctioned by the Inspector, nothing has been heard of the matter since?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Local Government Board inform me that in February they informed the Guardians of the Union that they were prepared to confirm schemes for the erection of 56 of the 72 cottages proposed, subject to the Guardians supplying the written consents of the persons interested to the changes recommended in the sites of the cottages. The Provisional Order will be issued as soon as these documents are received from the Guardians.

Mr. FIELD: Is it in consequence of the delay in not sending out the legal documents, and for that reason alone, that the matter has not been proceeded with?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes; that is what I have been given to understand.

GAS FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can state what amount of gas was consumed in the various Government Departments under the control of the Board of Works during 1893, and what was the total cost of the same; whether the gas supplied by the Gaslight and Coke Company at 3s. 1d. per 1,000 cubic feet is of the same quality as the gas for which they are charging 2s. 5d. per 1,000 cubic feet on the south side of Vauxhall Bridge; and whether cannel gas is supplied to the Government Departments; and, if not, when was it discontinued?

***The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS** (Mr. H. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): The quantity may approximately be taken at 150,000,000 cubic feet, of which about 143,000,000 were supplied by the Gas Light and Coke Company. The total cost was about £22,717, exclusive of meter rents. The whole of the gas now paid for by the Office of Works is "common" gas; and as the illuminating power is subject to the Board of Trade test, I have no doubt that the quality in the north and south of London is the same. I find that the supply of cannel gas to the Public Departments was discontinued in September, 1892.

EVICTIONS AT RATHCLINE, COUNTY LONGFORD.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that during the period covered by the inquiry of the Evicted Tenants' Commission a number of evictions have taken place upon the Annaly property in Rathcline, County Longford; that the holdings are now occupied by what are known as bogus tenants, some of whom have only recently been put in possession; and that the property has recently been offered for sale by the Court of Chancery; and whether, pending the passage of the Evicted Tenants Bill, steps will be taken to prevent the advance of public money to those bogus tenants, so that the former tenants may be enabled to purchase upon fair terms?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are generally as stated in the first paragraph, except that I have no information bearing cut the statement that some of the tenants are what the hon. Gentleman describes as "bogus." With regard to the second paragraph, the Government have no means of interfering with the sales to the tenants as suggested.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, should any of these supposed tenants apply for an advance of the purchase-money to the Purchase Commissioners, the Inspector sent down to make inquiries will take particular steps to ascertain whether the tenants are solvent people or not?

MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): Before an answer is given to the last question, I should like to ask whether it is not a fact that these estates are under the direction of the Landed Estates Court in Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: In answer to the hon. and learned Gentleman who put the last question, it is true that this estate is in Chancery and that the Land Judges have ordered the sale of it. In answer to the first question, I am not quite sure what Inspector my hon. Friend means, but whoever he may be, the Executive Government have no legal right to interfere with any of the transactions of the Land Commissioners' Department.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire of the Commissioners whether the Inspector, when making his investigations as to how far the holding is or is not a proper security for the whole amount of the purchase-money, will examine into the limit of the security offered, and also whether the tenant is or is not a person having a practical knowledge of agriculture?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am afraid I can only promise that I will call the attention of the Land Commissioners to what has been said on the subject this evening.

CORK, BANDON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can state the amount of the subsidy offered by his predecessor in Office to the Cork, Bandon, and South Coast Railway Company, provided they would give an additional daily train to West Cork, also the amount required by the Cork, Bandon, and South Coast Railway Company?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am assured that no such offer has been made within recent years by any Postmaster General. The payment required by the Railway Company at the present time is £1,500 a year—a sum which it would obviously be impossible to pay for an additional service in a district where the postal revenues are already insufficient to meet the expenditure.

MR. GILHOOLY: Does the right hon. Gentleman say there was no promise of a subsidy to this railway?

MR. A. MORLEY: I have inquired, and I feel sure that no such promise has been made.

MR. GILHOOLY: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to say that the late Postmaster General himself told me he would give a subsidy in consideration of the additional services.

TUAM GUARDIANSHIP DISPUTE.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the clerk of the Poor Law Union of Tuam rejected the nomination of Mr. Thomas Higgins, of Ryhill, for the position of Poor Law Guardian for a district of that Union; could he explain on what grounds; and whether he is aware that Mr. Higgins is a tenant of a farm, the annual Poor Law valuation of which is upwards of £30, and that he has been in occupation of it and liable for the poor rates since May, 1892?

MR. J. MORLEY: The fact is as stated in the first paragraph. It appears that Mr. Higgins is in possession of two grazing farms neither of which is separately valued, being included with other property for which another person is rated. The returning officer rejected, therefore, the nomination of Mr. Higgins, on the ground that he did not possess the necessary rating qualification for the office of Guardian.

STAMP DUTIES IN IRELAND.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the large proportion of counterparts stamped in Ireland which come from Belfast, and of the great inconvenience of not being able to get them stamped with the original deeds at Belfast; whether there is anything in the Stamp Act of 1891 to prevent the counterparts from being stamped there; whether he is aware that no matter how high may be the duty on the original deed, the duty on the counterpart does not exceed 5s.; and whether, considering the convenience of the public and the absence of risk to the Revenue, he will make inquiry into the matter and have this accommodation provided at Belfast?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I am not able to ascertain what proportion of counterparts stamped in Ireland come from Belfast, as in many cases they are presented at the Dublin office through Dublin agents. I have already stated that it is considered necessary for the protection of the Revenue that the comparison of the original and counterpart should be made by the solicitors to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue in Dublin or their trained assistants. The deeds can, however, be lodged with the collector of Inland Revenue at Belfast, who will transmit them to Dublin.

Mr. M'CARTAN: How can it be inconsistent to do this at Belfast? It is done in other places.

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I can only say the authorities tell me they cannot see their way to alter present arrangements. I am informed that it is done entirely with a view of protecting the Revenue, and that no doubt it is necessary.

Mr. M'CARTAN: I shall put a further question on this subject.

Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries into the matter, as it is one in which solicitors in the North of Ireland are very deeply interested.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order!

Mr. J. Morley

MR. DEENEY, J.P.

Mr. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for York (Mr. Butcher), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his knowledge that Mr. Deeney, of Rathmullen, in the County of Donegal, who was appointed to the Commission of the Peace for County Donegal in January, 1893, was the holder of a retail licence for the sale of intoxicating liquors in Rathmullen, and that he transferred his licence to his wife; and whether, under these circumstances, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland proposes to take any steps to revoke such appointment?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand that the Lord Chancellor has not yet completed his inquiries into this case, and I will, therefore, ask my hon. Friend to repeat the question on Monday.

PATENT OFFICE FEES.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the total amount at any time received in fees by the Patent Office on the 121,242 patents, voided at one stage or another, by renewal fees between 1st July, 1852, and 31st December, 1893; and the total amount of the aggregate surplus income or balance of account from 1st October, 1852, to the end of the year 1893, no mention of which has appeared in the official Patent Reports since 1880; and whether he will give instructions that this item, together with the total number of patents voided since 1st July, 1852, and the fees at any time paid thereon to the Patent Office, shall be printed, in close proximity, in the forthcoming and following yearly Reports of the Commissioner General of Patents?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): During the period of 41 years referred to fees amounting to about £3,000,000 were received in respect of voided patents; about £2,200,000 being initial fees covering three or four years' protection, and £800,000 renewal fees. It is not possible to give precisely the aggregate surplus income for the period named, and for this reason I am unable to comply with the request made in the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question. The House will remember that a considerable reduction was made in 1892 in the scale of renewal fees, and also that a heavy expenditure is being incurred in respect of the construction of the new Patent Office.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: Is that the sole reason for not giving what I ask for in the second part of my question?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I am told it is not possible to give the statement the hon. Member asks for.

SHIPPING CASUALTY IN LOUGH RYAN.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, on the 5th March, the skipper of a small vessel named the *Chance*, owned by Mr. James Woods, which was lying in Lough Ryan, was compelled by stress of weather to drive her on to the beach; that, after the vessel had been thus beached, the Receiver of Wrecks at Stranraer claimed payment of £1 13s. for deposition fees and personal expenses, and compelled payment by taking away the mainsail of the vessel, subjecting the owner to the expense of 10s. further charge, being the cost of recovering and taking back the mainsail from Stranraer to Lough Ryan; whether these proceedings are sanctioned by the Board of Trade; and what action is contemplated in reference thereto?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have made inquiry into the circumstances of the case to which my hon. Friend refers, and find that they are substantially as stated in the question. The Receiver of Wrecks at Stranraer acted strictly in accordance with the law and with his instructions, but as £1 13s. is a heavy tax on a vessel like the *Chance*, I have decided to remit the fee of £1.

DESTITUTION IN THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in consequence of the failure of the potato crop in the Arran Islands, owing to the drought of last year, the inhabitants of those islands are now for the most part destitute of the means of subsistence, and consequently unable to provide themselves with seed for the cultivation of their farms this year; and whether, under the extraordinary circumstances of the case, he will recommend a grant of moderate amount, either directly for the purpose of supplying seed, or indirectly to secure that object, by establishing relief works, such as the construction of a road and two or three boat slips, the provision of which would also permanently assist in securing the means of living, and enable the people to tide over seasons of agricultural disaster?

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): May I urge the right hon. Gentleman to give the question of the grant his most favourable consideration? I have no objection to assist.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am quite sure of that. Official inquiries show that, owing to a failure in the potato crop last year and the interruption of the early spring fishing, the Arran islanders have been embarrassed and impoverished. It had been hoped that a supply of seed potatoes could have been provided through the Congested Districts Board, but it has been found that their powers in this respect are confined to dealings for cash payment only. So far as the information before me shows, the condition of the islanders is not at present such as would justify the Government in asking Parliament for a special Vote. It appears that a private fund is being formed, which it is hoped will enable a good supply of seed to be provided. I hope the publicity given to it by the hon. Member will accelerate its growth. Meanwhile, the state of things will be carefully watched.

Mr. SEXTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman taken into consideration the fact that unless seed is sown within the next fortnight the potato crop this year will be lost? Will he undertake, in case the private fund should not meet the necessities of the case in the next fortnight, to consider the question of a small grant which would be acceptable to all parties in the House? I wish to thank the hon. Member for Belfast for his kind support.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am quite aware that time is pressing for the reason stated. The question is receiving most serious consideration, and not a day would be lost.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked if the Inspector had reported to the right hon. Gentleman the condition of the people in one of the small villages, where they were dependent on small crops, and were now totally destitute and in need of immediate aid?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot at this moment recall passages relating to specific villages or hamlets, but I will look into the matter.

CLAIMS FOR MALICIOUS BURNING IN COUNTY CLARE.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to a claim by Richard Reynolds, of Ballykeale, Kilfenora, County Clare, for compensation for alleged malicious injury by the burning of a haystack, whether Terence Reynolds, son of the claimant, stands committed for trial at the next Assizes on a charge of setting fire to the hay for which his father claims compensation; whether other alleged outrages on the farm held by Reynolds have also been made the subject of claims for compensation for him; and whether the consideration of these claims will be postponed till after the conclusion of the trial of Terence Reynolds?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The facts mentioned in the first two paragraphs of the question of my hon. Friend are substantially correct. As to the suggested postponement of the hearing of the claims for compensation, the matter, I understand, is one for consideration by the Grand Jury. It is obviously important that pending the trial of the son of the claimant on the criminal charge nothing should be done calculated to prejudice a fair trial; and though I am not sure that the police will have a *locus standi* on the hearing of the claims for compensation, yet I will cause instructions to be issued requiring them to endeavour to secure the postponement of the claims until after the trial at next Assizes.

DINGLE FISHERIES.

Sir T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the recent enormous takes of mackerel in the Dingle district; and, whether, in view of the importance of this fishing ground, he will use his influence with the Congested Districts Board to establish a fish-curing station at Dingle?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board inform me that the establishment of fish-curing stations by the Board on the Kerry and Cork coast is considered unnecessary, as a good market already exists there for both fresh and pickled mackerel.

GUN PRACTICE OVER THE MAPLINS.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he would direct the officer commanding at Shoeburyness to inform the inhabitants of Foulness Island when gun practice is to take place over the Maplins, as projectiles have fallen dangerously close to the road across the sands to the island?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): No reports of any inconvenience or danger at the place named have been received, but the Commandant at Shoeburyness has been requested to see that full notice is given on all occasions of intended practice over the Maplin Sands, and that when necessary a danger flag is hoisted at the point referred to.

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

Mr. FIELD: On behalf of the hon. Member for Waterford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland will be issued; and whether he can now state the names of the Commissioners?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I greatly regret the delay which has taken place in the constitution of the Commission; but hon. Members will understand the difficulties of balancing and properly representing the various interests. I hope to be able to submit the names for Her Majesty's approval in the course of the next three or four days, and immediately after that they will be laid before the House.

THE CANADIAN TEA DUTIES.

Mr. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state what the intentions of the Canadian Government are with reference to the alteration of the Tea Duties; whether teas blended in bond in Great Britain will be subject to any and what duty in the new tariff; and whether the Canadian Government can legally differentiate against this country and home labour in favour of China and other tea-exporting countries? At the same time, on behalf of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, I will ask that hon. Gentleman whether he can state if, under the new Canadian Tariff, teas in their original packages, and not blended with other teas, are to be subject to a tax; and whether Her Majesty's Government will use its influence with the Canadian Government to admit duty free from Great Britain all teas passed as pure for Home consumption by Her Majesty's Customs, and for which certificates of origin can be granted by Her Majesty's Customs, which certificates could also state that the said teas had been passed for home consumption and not for exportation only, thus protecting Canada from impure teas from the English market?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I regret we have not yet heard from the Governor General. If we do not do so this evening I will telegraph again. I must therefore ask that the question be postponed till Monday.

TEACHING STAFFS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that under the New Code the method employed for calculating the required amount of staff in public elementary schools, by substituting "number of names on the register" for "average attendance," will have the effect of reckoning for that purpose a large number of infants under five, who practically for many months in the winter do not come to the school to be taught; and whether he can see his way to alter Article 73 of the New Code, so that the computation may be made "on average attendance," and not "on number of children on the Register," or of reviving Rule 4, page 168, of Blue Book, 1883-4, by which, after six weeks' absence, the names of children unable to attend were allowed to be withdrawn from the Register?

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I laid a Minute amending Article 73 of the new Code on the Table on Monday, and it was circulated yesterday. I hope it may meet the objections which the hon. Baronet and others had to the Article in its original form.

ROAD SUBVENTIONS FOR EDINBURGH.

CAPTAIN HOPE (Linlithgow): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, with regard to the fact that in a recent case considered by the Sheriff of the Lothians and Peebles, the Sheriff having, on the evidence before him, awarded to the County of Edinburgh a higher road subvention from the City of Edinburgh than that hitherto paid, the Secretary for Scotland disallowed the increase on the ground that the evidence adduced did not warrant it, would he kindly state the grounds on which he arrived at a different decision from the judicial officer dealing with the case on evidence laid before him?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): Upon the Petitions presented to me by the Town Council of the City of Edinburgh and the Midlothian County Council, the Sheriff of the Lothians and Peebles was directed by me to hold a local inquiry under the provisions of Section 9 of the Roads and Bridges Act, 1878, in order to enable me to determine whether I should bring in a Provisional Order modifying the amount of the subvention, and I am glad to bear testimony to the able manner in which he conducted the inquiry. I must, however, point out that the Secretary for Scotland, while he is bound to grant the inquiry on application, is in no ways bound to follow the Report of his Commissioner; and that after serious consideration of that Report, in conjunction with all matters relative to the case, I arrived at the decision which has already been announced, and which I consider, in all the circumstances of the case, is a fair and equitable decision as between the parties concerned.

LAND REVENUE OF INDIA.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will place upon the Table of the House a copy of a recent Minute by the late Viceroy of India, in which he recommends certain reforms in the Land Revenue of India, especially the extension of the system of advances to cultivators, the introduction of greater elasticity into the Revenue system, and the restriction of the right of land transfer?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I am not sure that I have been able to identify the document referred to by my hon. Friend; but, if he refers to a Report furnished by the Government of India in consequence of a question asked in this House by my hon. Friend the Member for North Manchester, I shall be happy to place the Correspondence upon the Table of the House if he will move for it.

CANADIAN ROYALTIES ON BRITISH COPYRIGHT WORKS.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a statement in *The Daily Telegraph*, and other newspapers of the 11th of April, to the effect that the Canadian Government have forwarded a Despatch to the British Colonial Office notifying the Imperial Authorities that, after the next Session of the Dominion Parliament, the collection by the Dominion Customs of a royalty of 12½ per cent. on foreign reprints of British copyright works for the benefit of copyright holders will cease; and that the Colonial Authorities have been induced to take this action in view of the expected changes in the Imperial Copyright Laws as applicable to Canada; and, if so, whether any, and if any what, changes in the Imperial Copyright Law are contemplated?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Colonial Office informs me that no such Despatch has been received, but Her Majesty's Government is aware that the new Tariff Bill does contain a proposal that the duty of 12½ per cent. on foreign reprints will only be collected up to a given date in 1895. Canada wishes to be released from the Imperial Copyright Law, and a Departmental Committee under Lord Balfour of Burleigh was appointed last year to consider the subject. The reply of the Canadian Government to the Report of that Committee has recently been received and is under consideration.

Sir W. Wedderburn

SWINE FEVER.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Ramsey Division of Hants, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that, in carrying out the Swine Fever Regulations, there is sometimes great delay between the giving notice by the police and the declaration of the disease by the Board's Inspectors; and, as this delay causes great danger of infection and inconvenience, whether he can see his way either to employ the local Veterinary Inspectors at the first notice of an outbreak, or to make other arrangements to prevent delay?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): Under the Orders issued on the subject of swine fever it is the duty of the Local Authority to apply the necessary restrictions immediately upon their receiving information as to the existence, or supposed existence, of the disease, without waiting for the result of any examination of the viscera made by the veterinary officers of the Department, upon whose verdict the payment of compensation for swine compulsorily slaughtered must necessarily rest. It is, doubtless, the case that in some districts the local organisation was at first defective, but a gradual improvement has been effected, and there is now no reason to suppose that any very serious spread of the disease occurs owing to delay in dealing with the outbreaks reported.

BOARD OF IRISH LIGHTS.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what portion of the £40,000 granted in aid of the Mercantile Marine Fund, Civil Service Estimates, Class II., Vote 9, is given to the Board of Irish Lights Commissioners; and when this Vote will come before the Committee of the House of Commons?

MR. MUNDELLA: No portion of this £40,000 is given to the Board of Irish Lights Commissioners. It is granted in respect of certain extra charges which were placed on the Mercantile Marine Fund by the Act of 1882. The principal of these were expenses of survey staff and relief of distressed seamen.

Mr. WOLFF: Then will there be no opportunity of discussing the action of the Board of Irish Lights on this Vote?

Mr. MUNDELLA: None, Sir.

Mr. FIELD: But did not the right hon. Gentleman himself tell us we would be able to discuss the constitution of the Board on this Vote?

Mr. MUNDELLA: If I did I made a mistake.

SERVICE FRANCHISE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. NAPIER (Roxburgh): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the holders of the service franchise in Scotland, although on the roll for Parliamentary elections, are in a vast number of cases held disqualified for voting for School Board elections; and whether the Government have considered the possibility of providing an early remedy for this inequality?

Mr. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, will he allow me to ask him whether he himself did not introduce a Bill on this very subject in the last Parliament? As the matter is fairly non-contentious, could he not now re-introduce that Bill?

***The LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan, &c.): I did introduce such a Bill, I think more than once, in the last Parliament, and if there was a fair prospect of its being passed I would be glad to re-introduce it. The persons entitled to vote at School Board elections are those whose names are entered on the Valuation Roll as owners or occupiers of lands or heritages of the annual value of not less than £4. No value was entered against the names of holders of the service franchise till 1889. Now, in counties, the value of the premises which they occupy is entered against their names, and I consider that where that value is not less than £4, they are entitled to vote at School Board elections, but that where a less value than £4 is entered, they are not so entitled. In burghs a value is not entered against the names of the holders of the service franchise, and consequently they are not, in my opinion, entitled to vote at School Board elections. I may say that several years ago I introduced a Bill to confer the School Board Franchise upon all who possessed the Parliamentary Franchise. The question whether the matter can be dealt with will be considered.

***Sir C. W. DILKE** (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the difficulty is not confined to Scotland, but that it exists in England also?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I am not aware of that.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): Will the right hon. Gentleman not consider, in connection with the new Local Government Bill for Scotland, whether a qualification of less than £4 can be introduced?

***Mr. J. B. BALFOUR**: I am afraid that this topic, important as it is, is scarcely germane to the objects of the Bill.

FOREIGN MEAT IMPORTS.

Sir H. MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture when it is intended to introduce the Bill dealing with importation of foreign meat, of which notice was given by a Member of the Government in the House of Lords on the 16th instant; and in which House the Bill will be introduced?

Mr. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg, at the same time, to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in accordance with the statements of Lord Playfair, the Government will introduce a Bill giving powers to the Board of Agriculture to deal with cases of fraudulent misrepresentation in regard to the sale of meat; and, if so, whether such Bill will be introduced at an early date and proceeded with forthwith?

Mr. H. GARDNER: In reply to the hon. Baronet and to the hon. Member for Chester, I would say that a Bill for the purpose of giving to the Board of Agriculture, in cases affecting the general interests of agriculture, similar powers to those conferred upon the Board of Trade under Section 2 of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1891, is now under consideration, and I hope to be in a position to introduce it at an early date. If, as I hope will be the case, the Bill commends itself to the general approval of the House, there is no reason why it should not be proceeded with forthwith.

THE REGISTRATION BILL.

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I beg to ask the Chief Secretay to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government are in possession of any information which enables him to state or estimate the number of electors who, being entitled to vote under 2 Will. 4, c 45, s. 27, and also under 30 & 31 Vic. c. 102, or under 48 & 49 Vic. c 3, will be affected in respect of their right to vote by the provisions of the Bill introduced by him on Friday last?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Section 27 of 2 and 3 Will. IV., c. 45, so far as it confers a right to vote, has been repealed. There is no means of estimating the number of £10 occupiers who will be affected by the Bill. As regards persons who vote as inhabitant occupiers, the number of inhabited "houses," according to the Census of 1891, is 5,450,000; the number of inhabited "tenements" is 6,130,000. According to this enumeration—the precise accuracy of which is qualified in the Census Report—there are nearly 700,000 more inhabited tenements than houses, the difference arising from those houses which are let out in separate tenements being treated as one inhabited house. If the occupier of each tenement was a man who resided for the three months' qualifying period he would be entitled to a vote, but there must be a considerable deduction made from the number of tenements for empties, for women, and for persons otherwise disqualified. Deduction must also be made for those occupiers of tenements who are in law lodgers, and for occupiers who vote in another capacity—*e.g.*, as owners or freemen; but probably it may be taken roughly that the number of electors could not exceed the number of tenements. The question of several tenements to one house is practically limited to London, Newcastle, Sunderland, and two or three other large towns.

Sir H. JAMES: I am not asking about uninhabited houses. Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any information as to the number of voters under Section 27 that will be affected by this Bill?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I believe this is very much the same point as the right hon. Gentleman embodied in a question he addressed to me on a previous occasion.

Sir H. JAMES: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman I have never put this question before in any shape or form.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will inquire further into it.

Sir H. JAMES subsequently said: The Chief Secretary stated that the franchise clause in the Reform Act of 1832 had been repealed. But is it not the fact that the statute repealing the sections also re-enacts them?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Of course my right hon. Friend is aware that in a matter of this kind I am in the hands of my legal advisers. I will inquire further.

RIVAL AMERICAN MAIL ROUTES.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been drawn to the Return just issued by the Cunard Company as to the relative time occupied by the British boats, *viâ* Queenstown, and those of the American line from Southampton in delivering the mails at New York during the past 12 months, which shows a saving of time in favour of the British liners of over 41 days, while the time saved on the homeward voyage during the same period was over 23 days, or an aggregate saving of over 64 days; and whether, in view of these facts, he will take the necessary steps still further to advance the Queenstown Mail Service by accelerating the transport between Dublin and London?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I have not had an opportunity of analyzing the Return referred to, and indeed I scarcely think it would be necessary to do so, having recently furnished the House with a Return for the year 1893 relating to the mail service between this country and the United States. The question of accelerating the transport between Dublin and London is engaging my serious attention.

Captain DONELAN: Arising out of the latter part of the answer, may I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the rate of speed of mail trains on the London and North-Western Railway between London and Scotland is considerably greater than the same

Company's mail trains between London and Holyhead, notwithstanding the steeper gradients on the former route; and whether he is aware that the speed between London and Holyhead is little better now than it was in 1884, whereas on the Scotch route it has been increased 13 per cent.?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I think the allegations of the hon. Member are inaccurate except in one particular. The difference between the pace of the mail trains on the two routes is infinitesimal, that between London and Holyhead being 42·12 miles per hour, and between London and Glasgow 43·16 miles per hour.

Captain DONELAN: As my information is from a very good source, will the right hon. Gentleman make further inquiry?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Yes.

*Mr. DANE: When is the right hon. Gentleman going to give notice to terminate the present contract?

An hon. Member: Is it not the fact that the present mail train service is incomparably slower than the day express trains?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Undoubtedly there is a difference in pace, as the mail train has to perform a service which the other trains do not.

Mr. FIELD: When may we expect an answer in regard to this question, in which everybody in Ireland is interested?

Mr. A. MORLEY: A definite answer may be expected on the subject as soon as a definite conclusion has been arrived at.

PRIZES IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether a Rule is now in operation prohibiting or limiting the giving of prizes by School Boards for regular attendance; whether he will state the terms of any such Rule, and the date when and by whom it was made; whether he is aware that among members of School Boards and managers and teachers of Board schools a strong feeling exists that prizes for regular attendance have produced most beneficial results; and whether the Education Department will cause inquiries to be made with a view of retaining the power to give such prizes?

Mr. ACLAND: The Rule regulating the giving of prizes by School Boards for regular attendance at school may be shortly stated as follows:—Such prizes are legal only when they are given to the children whose attendance has been best, and not when they are given to all children whose attendances have reached a prescribed minimum number. This is also the Rule of the Local Government Board, acting through the district auditors, when dealing with the accounts of School Boards. The Rule as it now exists was made early in 1892. Before that date no attendance prizes whatever were allowed. No change on this matter has been made since the present Government came into Office. I will gladly consider any further information on the subject, but I believe most School Boards find that the existing Rule gives them all reasonable liberty.

ANTRIM CASTLE DEER PARK.

Mr. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any agreement was submitted to or entered into with Lord Massereene as to the use of the deer park of Antrim Castle for a camp of exercise; whether he will state the terms of the agreement; and, if made, why it has not been carried out; whether this deer park has been reported suitable for the purpose; and if any recent communication has been made to Lord Massereene with the view of having an arrangement arrived at?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The terms insisted upon by Lord Massereene were not such as the War Department could accept, and no recent communications have taken place relative to the acquisition of the deer park as a training camp. The deer park is considered suitable on the whole as a camping and exercising ground, although there are some drawbacks to its use as a rifle range.

PROMOTION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether Heads of Departments in the Civil Service have power to recommend that Second Division clerks be promoted to clerkships of the Upper Division without their being called upon to pass the open competitive examination for such posts; and whether he will consider the advisability of extending this principle to clerks of grades inferior to the Second Division, and thus provide a means of rewarding conspicuous merit in the lower grades of the Civil Service?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The answer to the first question is in the affirmative, but I cannot admit any analogy such as my hon. Friend wishes to draw. The standard of the competition for the Second Division, unlike that for the Upper Division, is moderate, and, now that the position of the Second Division has been so much improved in accordance with the recommendations of the Ridley Commission, I cannot contemplate the lowering of the standard of the Second Division by admitting into it persons from the lower grades who have passed a merely rudimentary examination.

JABEZ SPENCER BALFOUR.

Mr. YERBURGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the present position of affairs in regard to the extradition of Mr. Jabez Balfour; whether any fresh obstacles have arisen to retard such extradition; and whether he can give the House the probable date of Mr. Jabez Balfour's arrival in this country?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The case is still under examination by the Argentine Federal Judge at Salta, and Her Majesty's Government have forwarded all documents and taken every legal precaution necessary to the progress of the case. A certain amount of delay has, of course, been caused by the distance and the difficulties of communication, Salta being about 1,000 miles from Buenos Ayres. No fresh obstacles have arisen to retard the extradition, though, as the hon. Member is no doubt aware, some obstacles have been removed since the extradition was first applied for. It is not yet possible to say when the legal proceedings will have come to an end.

THE HALFPENNY POSTAL RATE.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the halfpenny postal rate extends to the transmission of private letters enclosed in unfastened envelopes?

Mr. A. MORLEY: No, Sir. The halfpenny postal rates does not extend to the transmission of private letters enclosed in unfastened envelopes. Any person so sending private letters is infringing the law, and the letters so sent become liable to twice the deficient postage.

MR. MATHEW WELD O'CONNOR.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has caused inquiries to be made into the charges that have been preferred against Mr. Mathew Weld O'Connor, a Magistrate of the County Meath; and, if so, with what result?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Lord Chancellor informs me that he has been in communication with the Receiver Judge with regard to the action of Mr. O'Connor as Receiver, and that he is not aware of any reasons sufficient to justify his removal from the Commission of the Peace.

COLOURABLE LICENCE TRANSFERS IN IRELAND.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the decision of the Queen's Bench that colourable transfers of retail licences are illegal, any steps will be taken in the case of Mr. Hegarty, J.P., Millstreet, County Cork?

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: Before the question is answered, I should like to ask the Chief Secretary whether Mr. Hegarty did not complain, on a former occasion, that his life was in danger in consequence of questions asked by the hon. Member?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am not aware whether that formidable consequence followed any question of the hon. Member. I am informed that the gentleman referred to was appointed to the Commission of the Peace in 1887, and that the then Lord Chancellor was satisfied he had, prior to his appointment, made a *bonâ fide* assignment of his licensed premises to his son, and had given up all connection with the business.

Dr. TANNER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the son only came of age on the 8th of last month, and that Mr. Hegarty lived on premises which communicated with the licensed premises?

MR. J. MORLEY: I was not aware of those facts.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Seeing that in several cases the Lord Chancellor has put pressure on gentlemen to transfer the licences before they received the Commission of the Peace during the last 12 months, what action, supposing the transfers to be illegal, does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take with regard to them?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Lord Chancellor now has this matter under his consideration, and is deciding what course he shall take.

DR. TANNER: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the question I have put as to the age of Mr. Hegarty's son, and as to the connection of Mr. Hegarty's residence with the licensed premises?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to these statements.

ORANGE DISTURBANCES AT BALLYNURE.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the attack made by an Orange assembly on the meeting of Presbyterian farmers at Ballynure, County Antrim, whether he can state why the extra police were sent for to Larne; whether a request was made by the constabulary that the meeting should not break up before the arrival of the extra police; whether he is aware that, after the windows were broken, the Rev. Mr. Lyttle, Unitarian minister, was struck with a stone, and the Rev. Mr. Armour, Presbyterian minister, was struck on the hat with a lump of hard clay, when leaving the Presbyterian Lecture Hall; and whether, considering that the chief object of the meeting was to prepare evidence for the Committee proposed to be appointed by Parliament to inquire into the administration of the Irish Land Laws, some steps will be taken to discover the ringleaders of the mob, with the view of bringing them to justice?

MR. J. MORLEY: (1.) The extra police were sent for on the occasion referred to by the sergeant on duty at Ballynure because of the unexpected arrival in the village of a band accompanied by a crowd numbering about 200, whose object apparently was to cause annoyance to the meeting. He considered it safer, therefore, to have more men on the spot, but their services were not required on arrival at Ballynure. As to paragraph 2, what took place, I understand, was this. The sergeant informed the chairman that he had sent for additional police and suggested that, if the chairman considered it advisable, the meeting need not break up until their arrival. The crowd, however, dispersed before the meeting was over. As to the third paragraph, in consequence of the representations made by my hon. Friend the Member for North Kerry, when I replied to a question on this subject on the 12th instant, further inquiries were at once directed to be made into the matter of the alleged stoning of these clergymen. The Divisional Commissioner, who proceeded to the locality, now states that the chairman of the meeting told him that missiles were thrown at the clergymen after the meeting, and that Mr. Lyttle was struck on the leg and Mr. Armour on the hat, but that neither of them was in any way injured. In explanation of the first Report made by the police that the clergymen were not stoned on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner states that no complaint was made to the police, who were patrolling the village, by either of the rev. gentlemen, and that these gentlemen did not even mention the occurrence to the chairman, in whose company they were after the meeting. Under these circumstances, and as both clergymen live at a considerable distance from Ballynure, I think my hon. Friend will acquit the police of any intention to wilfully mislead in their first Report. With reference to the fourth paragraph, the police are making every effort to trace the persons who assaulted the two clergymen who smashed the windows of the Lecture Hall.

MR. DANE: Arising out of this matter, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that the house referred to in the question was built by private subscription and is held under a trust deed containing a covenant that it should only be used for Sunday schools and meetings of a religious or educational character connected with the Presbyterian Church, and were the gentlemen named in the question using it for other and different purposes, and were they the same two clergymen who got up the Presbyterian Home Rule Address to the right hon. Member for Midlothian?

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): Is it the view of the Irish Government that if Presbyterian ministers please to hold a meeting in a house intended for private purposes such iniquity entitles an Orange mob to stone them with impunity?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have no means of either testing or answering the question of the hon. and learned Member for Fermanagh As to the question of the hon. Member for Roscommon, I may say it is not usual for Ministers to express their views on abstract propositions.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman intimate to the Commissioner of Police the undesirability of the police committing themselves to conclusive Reports affecting individuals without investigating the circumstances?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am quite sure that the Divisional Commissioner has already made a communication to that effect.

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY FARES.

Mr. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to the fact that the only trains run in Great Britain without third-class accommodation at 1d. per mile (except the Irish and Continental mail trains) are those of the Brighton Company; that the number of such Brighton trains is 15 daily; that the legal maxima per mile on the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway are first class 1d., second class $\frac{3}{4}$d., third class $\frac{1}{2}$d., as against first class $2\frac{1}{4}$d., second class $1\frac{3}{4}$d., third class 1d., on the Brighton Railway; and that the first and second class maxima on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway were raised $\frac{1}{4}$d. per mile in 1868, on account, as stated in the preamble of the Act, of the poverty of the Company, a poverty which does not now exist, he will direct the attention of the Committee about to consider the Company's Bill to these inequalities of charge, with a view to securing lower rates over the proposed new line?

Mr. MUNDELLA: With the exception of the London, Tilbury, and Southend, upon which the fares are low—presumably because the cost of construction was comparatively small — the fares of the Brighton Company compare favourably with those of other southern lines, and no complaint has been received by me of insufficiency of third-class trains. There does not appear to be any case for the intervention of the Board of Trade.

THE LOSS OF THE "BLAIR ATHOLE."

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Penrhyn and Falmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he has received any further information about the loss of the *Blair Athole* last summer; and whether the Admiralty intend taking further steps to ascertain whether any survivors of the crew might have landed on Warren Hastings Island or some other island in the vicinity, and are still alive?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The Admiralty received no information of the loss of any particular ship. A Report has been furnished by the owners of the ship *British General* that that ship was boarded by natives from Warren Hastings Island on the 4th of December last, who stated that 10 moons ago a large ship was wrecked and all hands drowned. H.M.S. *Pallas* is about to leave Hong Kong to make inquiries and ascertain if there are any survivors on the island.

LIVERPOOL TELEGRAPHISTS' GRIEVANCE.

Mr. SAUNDERS (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that at Liverpool certain telegraphists were, on Monday, the 16th of April, withdrawn from their ordinary morning attendances and told to attend in the evening to deal with the Press reports of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Speech, this course being adopted instead of employing overtime clerks, as hitherto, for special work; and whether, inasmuch as such a course of action subjects the ordinary business traffic to delay, and imposes upon the clerks the excessive duty of attending late at night and early the next morning, he will take steps to prevent a recurrence of such extra employment?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I will make inquiry on the subject of the hon. Member's question, and let him know the result.

NEWSPAPER POST.

Mr. SAUNDERS: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he proposes to continue the practice of carrying newspapers weighing six or eight ounces for ½d., seeing that the book post rate of two ounces for a ½d. involves a loss to the Department?

Mr. A. MORLEY: The Act of Parliament of 1870 (33 & 34 Vic. c. 79) gives special privileges to newspapers, as distinguished from other printed matter passing through the post; and, notwithstanding the loss of revenue resulting from the conveyance of newspapers, I do not at the present moment contemplate legislation with a view to withdrawing or restricting those privileges, though the subject is one which deserves, and is receiving, careful consideration.

PRISON ACCOMMODATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to appoint a Committee or Commission to consider the question of prison accommodation in the Metropolis?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): It is my intention to appoint a Departmental Committee to consider several questions, one of which is the subject of prison accommodation in the Metropolis.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. W. WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether contracting out of Employers' Liability Act is legal in Scotland?

***Mr. J. B. BALFOUR**: Contracting out is not prohibited by the Employers' Liability Act of 1880, and it has repeatedly been held by the Courts in Scotland that workmen have debarred themselves from the benefits of the Act by contracts with their employers. It might be made a question whether such contracts would, under the existing law of Scotland, exclude a claim at the instance of the widow or children of a workman who had been killed through the fault of an employer, or of someone for whom he was responsible, but I am not aware that this question has ever been decided or even raised in the Scottish Courts.

***Mr. HOZIER**: Did not the right hon. Gentleman, on the 30th October, 1880, give it as his opinion that contracts in Scotland cannot be sustained to the effect of excluding the claims of widows and children, and that, consequently, contracting out of an Employers Liability Act is practically impossible in Scotland?

***Mr. J. B. BALFOUR**: I see it stated in the newspapers, and I have no reason to doubt the statement, that I did give an opinion that such a contract would not exclude the claims of a widow or children, on the ground that these claims were not derivative but original, and it still seems to me that, on the principles of the existing Scotch Law, this view is sound. A decision to a different effect has, however, since been pronounced in the English Law Courts, and I am told by those who have had more to do with such cases than I have had for a number of years past, that it is not improbable that it would be followed in the Scotch Courts.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid.) asked if the Employers' Liability Bill of last Session would not have improved the position of Scotland in regard to non-contracting out?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Very materially.

THE IMPRISONED ARMENIANS.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will communicate to the House the steps already taken to secure the liberation of the Archbishops of Marash and Zeitoun, the Bishops of Hadjin and Arabgir, and other Armenians detained in prisons in Asiatic Turkey (or in exile), who, it is alleged, have not had fair trials, and some of whom have not had any trial, and upon whose behalf representations have been repeatedly made to the Foreign Office during the past two years?

***Sir E. GREY**: Her Majesty's Government have already stated that there would, in their opinion, be no advantage in publishing Papers regarding the Armenian question. Unofficial representations were made on behalf of the Archbishops mentioned, whose sentences were confirmed by the Court of Cassation in March, 1893. In September last Her Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* at Constantinople spoke to the Grand Vizier in the hope of obtaining some mitigation of the sentences passed on them and their companions. Her Majesty's Ambassador was instructed last week to ascertain whether it would be possible to do anything for them. The Bishops of Arabgir and Hadjin are not in prison, but exiled from their sees, and it would serve no good purpose to make any representation on their behalf.

Mr. SCHWANN : What about the other Armenian prisoners ?

*Sir E. GREY : It would only be possible to deal with all these cases by publishing Papers. We have made some unofficial representations.

Mr. SCHWANN : Are there any hopes of their being brought to trial ? I have received letters from persons who have been in prison a year without a chance of being tried.

*Sir E. GREY : There is often great delay, and when that is so, we urge the desirability of bringing prisoners to trial soon.

STATIONERY OFFICE PUBLICATIONS.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state, or will agree to a Return stating, in detail the names and nature of the Stationery Office Publications, which caused an expenditure in the year ending 31st March, 1893, of £22,352 13s. 4d., and the stock on hand of which, on the 31st March, 1893, was represented by so large a sum as £117,563 0s. 5d. ; and whether he anticipates that this latter sum will be actually realised by the disposal of these publications ?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT : The Return could certainly be made out, but the labour and cost would be so great that I do not think I should be justified in agreeing to it. I should explain that it is the practice to class as "Stationery Office Publications" every book or paper printed by the Stationery Office (except Parliamentary Papers) of which any copies are placed on sale, and the cost of printing these books is divided between the Sub-heads E, F, H, and K of the Stationery Office Vote. The sum of £117,563 0s. 5d. represents the net selling price of the papers on stock, but there is no chance of this sum being realised by sales. I hold in my hand a Return of the publications, which will perhaps assist the hon. Member to obtain the information he asks for. I will let him have it.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES : Do the publications include the Journals ?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT : Yes.

Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) : Is there a separate column showing the cost of each publication ?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT : Yes.

OCCASIONAL LICENCES.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, his attention having been called to the matter, he intends to take any steps to prevent the Commissioners of Inland Revenue construing the Act 26 & 27 Vic. c. 73, s. 20, according to what they consider its spirit, but against its wording, by granting occasional licences permitting the sale of drink after 10 p.m. for any entertainments or amusements other than a public dinner or ball ?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) : I have called the attention of the Inland Revenue to the strict letter of the law, which I have no doubt will be observed in the future ; but I do not consider that the action of the Magistrates, in extending to smoking concerts given in the Town Hall the exemption allowed in the case of public dinners and balls, is one calling for serious animadversion.

Sir W. LAWSON : Is not the action of the Magistrates against the law ?

Sir W. HARCOURT : I do not regard the matter as being of sufficient importance to call for any interference.

UGANDA.

Sir C. W. DILKE : I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Uganda Estimate, laid upon the Table on Tuesday, will be in the hands of Members ; and to what date is the Debate to be postponed ?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) : At the same time that the right hon. Gentleman answers that question perhaps he would find it convenient to give the House a general idea of the course of business for next week.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I propose on Monday next to take the remaining Budget Resolutions, and to make progress with the financial proposals of the Government. That is the main business that I can fix at present. In answer to the question of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean, I have to state that the Uganda Estimate will be distributed at once. The prolongation of the discussion on the Scotch Grand Committee has necessarily postponed the Debate, which was fixed for to-morrow, on Uganda. The fixing of the date for the Uganda Vote must now depend upon the progress of public business.

THE BUDGET PROPOSALS.

Sir M. HICKS BEACH (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state how much of the increased receipts estimated by him for the present and future years from the proposed increase in the Death Duties is due to the changes in the Succession Duty; to the graduation of the new Estate Duty personalty; to the imposition of the new Estate Duty on realty; and whether he proposes to increase the Stamp Duty now payable on the property of Bodies Corporate and unincorporate to an extent corresponding with the increased Death Duties on the property of individuals?

Mr. SEXTON: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will at the same time say whether the proposals for the increased duties on spirits and beer will be permanent, or will only apply to the current financial year?

Sir R. PAGET: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to lay upon the Table any explanatory statement with reference to the Budget?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will make a statement upon those points in the discussion on the Resolution relating to the Death Duties, which I propose to fix for Monday next. I have directed an explanatory paper on the subject of the proposed changes in the Death Duties to be prepared, and I hope it will be in the hands of Members to-night. But I must point out that no really accurate information on this subject, which is of a highly technical character, can be furnished, except in the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, which can only be introduced when the Resolutions are passed; and I would observe that the Paper laid on the Table by Mr. Childers was explanatory of the Budget Bill and not of the Resolution, the Resolution having been passed on the first night without opposition. I may take this opportunity of stating, in reply to a question which was put to me on Tuesday last by the hon. Member for North Kerry, that, having regard to the impending inquiries as to the relative incidence of taxation in the several parts of the United Kingdom, I think it is a fair demand, and it is only right that the proposals in the Budget for an increase of duties and upon spirits should take effect only for the present financial year.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Resolution on the Succession Duty will be taken first on Monday, or the Resolution on the Income Tax? Considering how very intricate and complicated the change in Death Duties is, cannot the right hon. Gentleman give the House longer time to consider both the explanatory statement which is to be circulated and the whole question generally?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The usual and convenient course is to take the Resolutions, and then to have the Bill and discuss the proposals on that. That was the course taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian with reference to Mr. Childers's Budget. It is the proper way; and, indeed, the only possible way is to get on to the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill as soon as may be; because the House will find in that Bill what they cannot know otherwise—the details of the method by which we propose to deal with this intricate subject. We propose to take the Death Duty Resolution first on Monday and then the other Resolutions.

Mr. YERBURGH: Do the Government propose to introduce the Welsh Disestablishment Bill next week?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I hope that we may be able to do that; but I would rather reserve a definite statement until the Home Secretary returns to town. I hope we shall find an opportunity of introducing the Bill next week.

Dr. MACGREGOR: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he does not think that the duty on whisky is high enough already; and whether that duty is not out of all proportion to the duty on the Englishman's beer?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That question can scarcely arise at the present moment.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): May I ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, as there is no intention on this side of the House to oppose the Parochial Electors (Registration Acceleration) Bill, he will give the House sufficient time to consider the provisions before the Second Reading is taken?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Yes, Sir; if the House will allow me to introduce the Bill to-night, I will postpone the Second Reading for at least a week.

THE CRIMES ACT REPEAL ACT.

Mr. J. REDMOND (Waterford): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary a question of which I have been unable to give him notice, but which he will, I think, be able to answer. Yesterday, by a large majority, the House of Commons passed the Second Reading of a Bill for repealing the Irish Coercion Act. I ask him if he will confer with the Leader of the House and his colleagues in the Government to see whether it is possible, consistently with the due progress of other business, to give facilities for the further stages of the Bill?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will consult my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

THE MARKING OF FOREIGN MEAT.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Committee appointed by the House of Lords on the 17th instant will be empowered to consider the Marking of Foreign and Colonial Meat (No. 2) Bill, and also the other Bills on the same and kindred subjects, which have been introduced in the House of Commons?

Mr. H. GARDNER: My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this question. As I understand, the inquiries of the Committee of the House of Lords which was appointed last Session, and has now been re-appointed, are complete so far as meat is concerned, and inasmuch as the Committee had before them the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for the Altrincham Division last Session, which is closely analogous to the Bill to which the hon. Member refers, I should scarcely suppose that the Committee would consider it necessary to re-open that portion of the subject committed to them. But the matter is scarcely one with regard to which it is for me to express an opinion, and if the Committee decided to re-consider the proposals embodied in the Bills now before the House, there is nothing to prevent them from doing so.

MISSING VESSELS.

Mr. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the number of vessels reported to his Department as missing during each of the last three years for which the accounts have been made up, and the number of inquiries into cases of missing ships which have been held in each of those three years respectively?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The number of vessels belonging to the United Kingdom which were reported to the Board of Trade as missing during the last three years for which the accounts have been made up—namely, years ended June, 1891, 1892, and 1893, were 69, 59, and 32 respectively. The corresponding numbers for the years 1881, 1882, and 1883 were 126, 172, and 152. Inquiry was made by officers of the Board of Trade in every case, but formal inquiries were held in only six cases in 1891, two cases in 1892, and three cases in 1893. Since June last inquiries have been ordered in 14 cases. Each case is carefully considered, and inquiry is ordered in any case in which it is thought that it can be usefully held.

MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN INDIA.

Sir D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he would grant a Return showing the yearly increase of the military expenditure of India, in that country and in England, from 1875 to 1893?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: There is no objection to granting such a Return. I will confer with my hon. Friend as to its form.

FREED SLAVES.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he could state to the House what number of slaves have been freed since 1888 within the territory of the British East Africa Company, and what number during the same period on the neighbouring station by Her Majesty's Naval Forces, and as to the latter at what cost; whether, in the event of the administration of the coast reverting to the Sultan of Zanzibar by the surrender of the Company's concession, provision will be made that the arrangements and treaties concluded by the Company for the protection of aboriginal tribes from slavery and for facilitating the redemption of slaves will continue in effective operation; and whether, in view of the Imperial grants recommended by Sir Gerald Portal towards the cost of administration in Uganda and British East Africa, any aid for the same purpose has at any time been granted, or proposed to be granted, to the British East Africa Company while it continued responsible for occupation and administration; if not, what resources were available for purposes of administration by the Company?

***Sir E. GREY**: The number of slaves said by the British East Africa Company to have been freed by them since 1888 is 3,015. The number freed by Her Majesty's Naval Forces during the same period is 1,287. The cost is mainly that of all Her Majesty's ships engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and I cannot give a separate estimate of this particular portion of it. No such arrangements or treaties as those referred to could properly be made by the Company within the territory covered by the concession of the Sultan of Zanzibar, nor have they been made. The only grant made to the Company was the sum of £10,000 voted last year for the prolongation of the occupation of Uganda; and with regard to the resources of the Company, I must ask the hon. Baronet to refer to the Reports of the Directors.

THE CAVAN LAND COMMISSION.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Bomford, who is now acting as valuer for the Land Commission in County Cavan, was formerly agent to a large landlord in the county; that he is related to that landlord, and to several other landlords in the county, and to Mr. Barnes, the principal valuer for the landlords in the county in fair rent cases; that he was formerly a member of a Sub-Commission in the county, and removed to another county on account of his close connection with the landed interest there; and whether these facts were known to Mr. Wrench and other members of the Commission when Mr. Bomford was sent as valuer to Cavan?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Land Commissioners have not yet fully replied to the inquiries which I have addressed to them on this subject, and I must ask my hon. Friend, therefore, to be good enough to again postpone the question.

Mr. KNOX: I should like to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact I put this question down two days ago?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes; but the reply I have received is not sufficiently full.

CATHOLIC MAGISTRATES IN ANTRIM.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many Catholic Magistrates are resident in the Petty Sessions district of Toome, County Antrim; whether, owing to the want of Magistrates resident in the district, Magistrates from another district had to attend recently in order to hold Petty Sessions; and whether steps will be taken to remove the present grievance?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that there are no Roman Catholic Magistrates resident in this district. There has been, however, no want of a Court of Petty Sessions at Toome by reason of the absence of Magistrates resident in the district. As to the last paragraph, the Lord Chancellor some time since made selections for the County Antrim Bench of Magistrates which will meet, amongst others, the case of the Toome District.

IRISH TELEGRAPH EMPLOYÉS.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with reference to Clause 10 of Treasury Order of the 15th of August, 1890, in how many cases of postal or telegraph *employés* in Ireland has this order been put in force since the date of its issue; how many surveyors, assistant surveyors, and postmasters of head post offices are now over the age limit; and, if any, what are the particular circumstances that exist in each case for the suspension of this Order; and whether he would now consider it expedient in the interests of the greater efficiency of the Public Service to enforce its provisions in every instance in which it is applicable?

MR. A. MORLEY: In Ireland the clause to which the hon. Member refers has been put in force in every case. In reply to the second paragraph, there are not any of the officers named to whom the clause applies and who are over the age limit. The hon. Member is possibly not aware that the Order in Council to which he refers applies only to officers who are placed on Scales or drawing Salaries in excess of those of the Second Division.

SWAZILAND.

BARON H. DE WORMS (Liverpool East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government are unable to carry out the arrangement entered into with the South African Republic for the transfer of Swaziland to that Republic; whether it is true that many of the indunas favourable to the arrangement have been murdered at the instigation of the Queen Regent; and whether, as stated, the condition of affairs is dangerous and a massacre is apprehended?

MR. S. BUXTON: The position at the present moment is this: A Convention was negotiated between Her Majesty's Government and the South African Republic under which the latter were to be at liberty to negotiate an Organic Proclamation with the Swazi people for taking over the administration of the country, without, however, incorporating it into the Republic. This Organic Proclamation has been submitted to Her Majesty's Government. The South African Republic are now in negotiation with the Swazis in order to obtain their assent to the Organic Proclamation. As regards the last two questions, we have no confirmation of the rumours, but are in communication with the Officer Administering the Government on the whole subject.

MOTIONS.

PAROCHIAL ELECTORS (REGISTRATION ACCELERATION) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have to ask the leave of the House to introduce a Bill to accelerate the Registration of Parochial Electors in England and Wales in the present year. As the House will recollect, under the Local Government Act of last Session the 8th of November was fixed as the day for the election of the new Parish Councils, and it was understood at the time that a Bill would be introduced to facilitate the registration of the electors. In the course of negotiations with the Leader of the Opposition, it was arranged that this matter should be treated as non-contentious, subject to two conditions—one, that the day on which the Parliamentary Register came into effect should not be altered, and the other that no expense should be thrown on Local Authorities by the acceleration of the Parochial Register. The acceleration of the Parochial Register involves the acceleration of some of the stages of the Parliamentary Register, but no change in the date when the Parliamentary Register is to come into effect. After much consideration of the matter, I have come to the conclusion that it will not be possible to complete the Register of parochial electors in order that the election for the Parish Councils may take place on November 8, and that if any attempt were made to do that there would be serious risk of a defective Register. The Bill, therefore, provides that the Parochial Register shall come into operation on November 22nd, and the Revising Barristers will be required to commence their duties five days earlier—namely, on September 3, in lieu of September 8. The Bill also proposes to shorten the period of revision by a fortnight, reducing it from five weeks to three weeks, and the period allowed to clerks of County Councils for the completion and printing of the Register will be shortened by 10 days. If additional Revising Barristers become necessary to complete the revision within three weeks, instead of five weeks, the whole cost is to be borne by the

Treasury, and no part of it by the Local Authorities, as at present. If the House agrees to the Bill, it will be possible to hold the first meetings of the Parish Councils within a few days after November 22. The Bill is in strict accord with the arrangement to which I have referred, and I hope the House, therefore, will at once consent to its introduction.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to Accelerate the Registration of Parochial Electors in England and Wales in the present year."—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 175.]

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne), in asking for leave to introduce a Bill to facilitate and make provision for the restoration of Evicted Tenants to their Holdings in Ireland, said: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to think that the difficulties of the task before me are not aggravated on this occasion, as they might have been, by any of that passion which has unfortunately been associated with Irish controversies. We have already discussed an Irish Land Bill, a Bill repealing the Crimes Act, and one other Irish matter without any of that rise in temperature which hon. Gentlemen rightly deprecate. It is my object to avoid every word likely to promote a revival of the recrimination and passion which have been associated with the subject of the evicted tenants. Among other reasons, the quietude in Ireland seems to furnish a particularly good opportunity for dealing with this exceedingly difficult question in the spirit in which it ought to be approached, and I am glad to think that, in bringing proposals before the House on this subject, I shall, at all events, secure a reasonable support from my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin, and other gentlemen sitting in that quarter of the House. Prior to his departure for America last September, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham is reported to have seen some gentleman of the Press and to have said to him—

> "I may say that I don't see what objection there could be to an extension of the 13th clause of the Land Act. . . . I am of opinion that the tenants ought to approach Mr. Balfour on the question if they wish to hope for anything. I may remark that I am quite prepared to admit that it is most desirable that some equitable measure should be passed in the interests of those evicted tenants, who, it appears, have suffered much; but this can only be accomplished by an agreement between the Unionists and Gladstonians. The subject, being a social as well as a political one, demands attention, and I shall be prepared to assist in an equitable settlement."

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin used still fuller language pointing in the same direction. He said—

> "He himself should be in favour of any well-considered Bill for that purpose. It was desirable that they should be generous in their treatment of these tenants, for they went out at a time when Ireland was greatly agitated, and when men lost their heads and ceased to be masters of themselves. . . . A new arrangement was necessary, and if the Government brought in a reasonable Bill he should be willing to give it all the support he could, and he believed it would be the policy of the Unionist Party to give it an unhesitating support."

The hon. Member for South Tyrone, in an article recently published, goes so far as to say that—

> "Although the Government proposals may be immoral, revolutionary, or novel, any effort to deal with the state of affairs at once so dangerous and so extraordinary ought to be fairly considered and judged."

I will not quote language which was used so far back as 1891 by the hon. Member for South Hunts, but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester said—

> "And for my own part, if I were an Irish landlord, even if it were not wholly to my own personal and pecuniary interests, I should desire to restore peace to that part of the country in which my property was situated, and to see that on fair, equitable, and even generous terms the tenants were restored to their ancient homes."

I am not assuming that declarations of this kind from the two sections of the Opposition ought to bind them to support the proposals which I shall have the honour of laying before the House; but, at all events, they encourage me to hope that these proposals will receive reasonable and fair consideration. I will not go into the origin of this mischievous business, because it seems to me we shall not advance our object by one jot or tittle either by inquiring whether Great Britain is morally responsible for the two great agrarian risings which have taken place in the last 15 years, or by inquiring whether the Plan of Campaign was justified by the action of this House in rejecting the proposals brought forward by Mr. Parnell in the Autumn of 1886. What brings the matter before me, as one responsible for government in Ireland, is that it is a source of administrative confusion, and a source of social trouble. Everybody in the House can see that the presence of bodies of evicted tenants remaining as squatters near the farms out of which they have been put is in itself extremely demoralising. The evicted tenants are, I believe, generally lodged by neighbours and supported by neighbours, who have as much as they can do to keep themselves, while the farms lie waste, save so far as they are used by trespassers, with the consent of the evicted tenants, who allow the use of the lands in this way in return for the help given them by their neighbours. This is a deplorable state of waste and demoralisation which affects, and obviously must affect most injuriously, all who are brought within the reach of its influence. The Report of the Mathew Commission contains a sentence which illustrates this state of things—

> "The present condition of the evicted farms on many of the estates is deplorable. The land has gone to waste. Fields, once cultivated and fairly productive, are now covered with furze and weeds. Tracts reclaimed by the industry of the tenants from bog or mountain are returning to their original condition. The former tenants, with little or no occupation, hang about their old farms, and have never relinquished the hope of reinstatement. It is not surprising that, in view of this condition of things, the authorities have considered the presence of an additional police force on many of the estates advisable."

On the occasion when I first spoke on this matter, after I had come to Office, I referred to the cost to the State of this deplorable state of things. For that I was attacked rather severely, and it was said that crime and disorder must be put down at whatever cost. I will not dwell upon that argument, because it is one not entirely relevant; but if I can show that there are means of putting an end to this source of disorder, and if it would save a certain amount of expenditure which could be applied to purposes for which Ireland stands in need, I am sure everyone will admit that the means are worth trying. I am now going to show, or try to show, that if there are means of putting an end to this source of disorder a certain amount of money will be well spent in doing it. The late Government, the House will remember, were so struck with the desirableness of putting an end to this state of things that they brought in—or rather accepted—the well-known 13th section of the Land Act of 1891. The basis of that section was an agreement between the parties. The tenants were not to be reinstated as tenants and no action was to be taken unless an agreement was arrived at, and we cannot disguise from ourselves that the policy of the Government in accepting Section 13 was to restore the evicted tenant to the right which he had legally forfeited and lost. Therefore, I hope that from no quarter of the House shall we hear, when this Bill is fully discussed, anything of the fraudulent debtor argument. Whether these men were held to be fraudulent debtors or not, they were good enough to receive under the 13th section large advances from the Imperial Exchequer. But the 13th section of the Act of 1891 was undoubtedly a failure. Under that section there were 189 applications, embracing only 19 estates. Of these, sales were, up to March 31, completed in 138 cases on 12 estates, and there are 42 cases at this moment outstanding, while nine applications have been refused. One reason, no doubt, of the failure of Section 13 was that it was limited to a period of six months, and in that time the parties could not come to the agreement which the provision required. When Section 13 expired it was found that it had not the operation which its promoters desired and expected. Before I go into the proposals of the Bill I should like to make one preliminary observation. When considering the proposals we make it is essential—it is vital—that Members of this House should divest themselves of the idea that the relations between landlords and tenants are the same in Ireland as in England. The relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland by your own legislation are something now radically different from the relations between landlords and tenants in England, and therefore I do ask the House, in this case at all events, to try to put themselves into the position of Irishmen and try to enter into the feelings with which evicted tenants regard eviction and to view our proposals in that light. Before the Mathew Commission the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin used some expressions germane to this matter. He said—

> "I think it unfortunate that we have to use the expression 'landlord and tenant.' If we used instead some such phrase as landlord part owner and tenant part owner it would contribute to clearness on the subject."

[*A laugh.*] The noble Lord laughs. I shall give him some material which may lead him to reconsider his mirth. We know very well that the relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland is, indeed, what the Archbishop says—it is nothing else than a relation of partnership.

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) was understood to say that his interruption had reference to the tenant having a certain share in the freehold.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Well, then, the noble Lord agrees with the Archbishop, and thus we have emphasised the partnership or dual ownership. Let the House recollect what it is that Parliament has said on three different occasions to the Irish landlord. By the Act of 1870 Parliament said to the Irish landlord, "If you want to turn the tenant out you shall pay him compensation for disturbing him"—not merely for improvements. In 1881 Parliament went further, and it said to the landlord, "You shall not only not turn him out without compensation, but you shall not exact from him a higher rent than a Land Court shall decide is a fair and proper rent." I may be told that these were measures passed by a Liberal Government that lacked interest in property, but Parliament went still further in 1887, when the right hon. Gentleman brought in a Bill which said to the landlord—"You shall not only not turn the tenant out without compensation, you shall not only not exact from him more than what the Court thinks to be a fair rent, but you shall for a certain number of years receive a lower rent than that which the Court had three or four years ago decided was fair." Therefore, if we examine this subject fairly and reasonably, we must admit this is a fundamental divergence between the Irish and the English Codes. Now, I shall describe to the House as briefly as I can the state of things in Ireland which justifies the proposals that we make. I have shown what steps the late Government took in order to deal with the mischief, and I have also reminded the House of the position which the Irish landlord now holds and which the tenant now holds. I will proceed to describe what our proposals are. They are rather intricate, and gentlemen will do well to reserve anything like full or definite criticism of our proposals until they have seen the Bill in print, which I think I may say will be in 24 hours from now. The foundation of our proposal is the institution of a Board of three arbitrators, whose office is to last for three years. The proposal that arbitrators are to enter into this question may at first startle hon. Gentlemen, but you recollect that you employed a Department as arbitrators to settle a question far more important and of wider range than this—namely, the fixing of agricultural rents in Ireland. Therefore, the idea of applying arbitration to the agrarian problem is not new. I have said that one reason why the 13th section failed was that time enough was not given for the making of agreements; but there was another reason, and that was the tenant was shy of approaching the landlord and the landlord was slow—was unwilling—to approach the tenant, because each of them feared that any overture would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. It is because we believe this, and because of the reluctance of the two parties to approach each other, that we propose to set up this Board or Court of Arbitration. In our opinion, settlements are much more likely to be arrived at if the procedure is changed and a tribunal set up than if we left the parties to approach each other. We think it will greatly facilitate a settlement that there shall be a neutral body to resort to to enable the parties to come to terms. It will be said, "Why have a separate tribunal? Why not intrust these functions to the Land Commission?" Well, we considered that suggestion with the greatest care. It is one on which we received a great deal of conflicting advice from competent persons, and we came to the conclusion, first, that the Land Commission has quite enough to do, and, in the second place, that their permanent and ordinary functions are of a character which makes it desirable to exclude them from duties which might subject them to suspicion and charges. We desire to attract rather than to force the landlord and tenant, and we think we have taken one of the best ways to bring about a settlement between the parties. We take a separate Board to do this special work, and we believe it will do that work more rapidly than the Land Commission can do it. We must all see that these matters would be entangling work for the Land Commission. So much for the tribunal. I will now describe the procedure. We first of all take the case of land which is evicted land still in the occupation of the landlord. Our Bill will affect tenants whose holdings have been determined since 1879. Within one year from the passing of the Act the evicted tenant may petition the arbitrators to be reinstated as tenant of his holding, and the arbitrators are to consider whether there is a *primâ facie* case for reinstatement. I shall be told, no doubt, that this is a very loose expression. What is a *primâ facie* case? But the words by which I propose to guard the expression "*primâ facie* case for reinstatement" are—

> "Owing to the circumstances of the district and the circumstances under which the eviction took place, or some other cause which may appear to them to be sufficient."

The first thing that has then to be done is a Petition from the tenant praying for reinstatement, and the second is the formation of the view in the mind of the arbitrators that the tenant has made out a *primâ facie* case. On these grounds the arbitrators will make a conditional Order for reinstatement, and serve a notice both of the Petition and the conditional Order upon the landlord. If the landlord does not object of course the transaction will go on, and the conditional Order will become absolute, the evicted tenant being reinstated in his holding subject to conditions to be presently stated. But suppose the landlord does object to the Order, then the arbitrators are to hear the parties. In doing this we borrow a section from the Land Act of 1891, and we say that the arbitrators are to form an opinion on the question whether the conduct of either the landlord or the tenant has been unreasonable, or that the one has unreasonably refused any proposal made by the other. Then if that be the case, the arbitrators can dismiss the Petition on the one hand, or on the other they may make the Order absolute, subject to such condition as they may consider to be consistent with justice. I admit that the language we have imported is not exactly on all-fours with the section of the Land Act, and is applied under somewhat different circumstances, but the language we do use is employed to describe certain equities similar to those that were dealt with under the Act of 1891. Well, then, supposing the Order is made that the tenant is to be reinstated, he must go back provisionally on the old rent. He must go back on some rent, and no other than the old rent is available. But this rent is ultimately to be transformed into a fair rent after an investigation either by the arbitrators or the Land Commission. If the landlord and tenant agree, then the arbitrators may fix the rent exactly as the Land Commission might do it. If, on the other hand, they do not agree, the tenant will, of course, be the possessor of a tenancy, and he would have a right, as any other tenant has, to go before the Land Commission and have a fair rent fixed.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Will this affect vacant land?

Mr. J. MORLEY: We are now dealing entirely with land which is in occupation of the landlord.

Colonel WARING asked whether land which was being cultivated by the landlord was to be deemed vacant land or derelict?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is difficult enough to deal with the subject without going into these details. All I can say is that I have confined this explanation to a holding which is in possession of the landlord. Now I come to a financial provision which will, no doubt, be of great interest to the House. If the arbitrators think fit they may direct payment to the landlord for arrears and costs not exceeding two years of the old rent. The House will remember that the Cowper Commission recommended that no rent should be recoverable beyond two years, and I think a most wholesome reformation would take place in Irish land practice if that could be made law. The arbitrators may make to the landlord a free grant of one-half of that sum out of moneys to be placed at their disposal by Parliament. The other half is to be secured or paid by the tenant. I may point out that there is a precedent, and a most remarkable precedent, for that in the Arrears Act of 1882, where, in the case of the insolvency of the tenant, the State advanced one year's rent, and the condition precedent was that the tenant should himself have in hand a year's rent of his own. Therefore the notion that every evicted tenant, or most of them, are absolutely insolvent, and unable to find any portion of money for the landlord to discharge arrears and costs, is not entirely conformable to the facts. I will say further that Parliament would have a right to expect the friends of the tenants, wherever they may be, to help them to provide this sum. If the State comes forward to pay half the snm, it is not unreasonable to expect that the other half will be forthcoming from the tenant. Then we had to consider in this connection whether these advances of one-half for arrears and costs should be made by way of loan or free grant, and we came to the conclusion, with a view to bringing about a real settlement, to make it a free grant and not a loan. I should like to say in reference to that course that gentlemen who speak lightly of it can hardly have looked into the Blue Books with the records of evidence taken before it, because it is impossible to found a sound and full and comprehensive and exhaustive judgment unless you have dipped very deeply indeed into that volume. The landlord is not to be left without any option. We propose that if he likes he may require the petitioner to purchase instead of taking him back as a tenant. He may insist on the transaction of purchase. The arbitrators in that case are to fix the price, and if the petitioner refuses to purchase at that price he forfeits his claim for re-instatement. If the order as to price is made absolute, the arbitrator would then proceed to fix the tenant in the holding and transfer Guaranteed Land Stock equal in nominal amount to the price to the landlord, just as the Land Commission would do in a similar transaction. We propose one difference, which is not unimportant. The House is aware that, as the law now stands, in these transac tions of purchase one-fifth of the purchase-money is retained in the hands of the Land Commission for something like 18 years. We propose not to retain in these cases the landlord's one-fifth. It may interest the House to know what is the operation of the Land Purchase Act in this respect. It appears that from 1885 down to March 31 last the total amount which the Land Commission applied out of guarantee deposits to meet the default of purchasers was £2,406 18s. 6d., on purchases representing about £10,000,000 sterling, and that no guarantee deposit has been so applied in the case of any advance made under the Land Purchase Act of 1891. This shows that in foregoing this deposit of the landlord's fifth we are not asking the State to encounter any serious risk. If the default on £10,000,000 be only a little over £2,400, then at the same ratio for, say, £500,000 under this Bill the possible risk would be less than £125. We give no power of compulsory purchase, and unless the landlord actually requests that the transaction shall be settled by the sale of the land by way of reinstatement there is no sale at all. The tenant has no option between restoration and purchase, and has no right to insist on purchase. In fact, when the tenant is put back on the land he has no rights in relation to it beyond what the tenant has at the present moment. So much for the provisions as to the land in the occupation of the landlord; but I may add that we propose, in cases where the arbitrator thinks it desirable, he may be empowered to advance to the reinstated tenant whose house has been destroyed or dilapidated a small sum, not to exceed £50, for putting up a house or place in which the tenant can live. I will now turn to the more difficult question as to land in the occupation of a new tenant with a substantial interest in the holding. According to the evidence given before the Mathew Commission, the number of these tenants is not very large; but whether it is large or small, the principle we propose to apply will be the same. The proceeding in cases where the land has been let to new tenants will be this: the evicted tenant is to petition as before; a notice is to be served on the new tenant of this petition, and upon that the new tenant may object, and if he objects we say that that must be treated as an absolute block on the jurisdiction of the arbitrators which could not be revived as long as the objection remains on the file. I think it will be felt that in that provision, though it may lead to some difficulty, we have consulted what will be the feeling of the majority of the House of Commons and of Parliament, and what will be deemed most equitable under all the circumstances of the case. But let us suppose the new tenant does not object. Then, of course, the arbitrator will treat the land as if it were in the possession or occupation of the landlord, but on certain conditions attaching to the land. The arbitrator is to determine the compensation which is to be paid to the new sitting tenant for his disappearance, and if he thinks fit he may advance one-half of the sum so proposed to be paid to the new tenant, leaving the other half to be paid by the tenant who desires to come in.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: How far does the Bill go back?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It will include all cases between 1879 and the date of the passing of the measure—all cases where the arbitrators think there is a *primâ facie* case for reinstatement, from 1887 downwards. As to the question of funds, we propose that £100,000 shall be charged on the Irish Church Temporalities Fund [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, it is an Irish fund. This fund has nothing to do with purchase transactions which have been made in the ordinary way. It will be placed at the disposal of the arbitrators for the purposes of this Bill. Of course the official staff, which will be a small one, or, at any rate, will not be considerable, will be paid out of moneys voted by Parliament. That and the salaries of the arbitrators constitute the only charge which will fall on the British taxpayer as far as the provisions of this Bill go. This sum of £100,000 will have to meet the half arrears to the landlord, the half compensation to the tenant, and a sum not exceeding £50 in the case of holdings where there is no house for the tenant to live in. I will now give some figures showing the number of holdings on the 17 estates especially inquired into by the Evicted Tenants' Commission which might come before the arbitrators. The total number of evicted holdings—the expression is not grammatical, but it is useful—on these estates was 1,350. The tenants were reinstated in 414 cases, and new tenants, commonly called "planters," settled with the old tenants in 15 cases, making together 429. Nine hundred and twenty-one cases therefore remain to be dealt with. Of these holdings there are in the hands of planters as tenants 215, and in the hands of planters as purchasers 20, in all 235 holdings.

Mr. SEXTON: The number of new tenants was only 102.

Mr. J. MORLEY: That is so; 235 holdings are in the hands of 102 planters. Then there are in the hands of landlords, land corporations, and similar bodies 482 holdings, and there also lying derelict 204. The rental of the entire 1,350 holdings is £21,230, and on the 921 holdings will be about £14,500. So much for the 17 estates which, after all, are the principal seats of the mischief with which we have to deal. But, besides all this, applications come from the enormous body of 2,755 evicted tenants who desired to be heard before the Mathew Commission. The rental of those tenants was, roughly speaking, £100,000, and the amount of arrears said to be due was £221,000, or rather more. If I were asked what proportion of this large number of evicted tenants is likely to be comprehended within the scope and operation of the Bill now before the House, I am obliged to say it is almost impossible for me to offer any sound or reliable data. One cannot tell how many of these 2,755 cases were cases such as it is proposed to deal with under this Bill. All I can say is that for the 921 cases on the 17 estates already referred to as being the main centre of the mischief, assuming that in every case the landlord received from the arbitrators one year's rent, and about the same sum went for building grants, and a similar sum went for compensation in the case of the new tenants, it is probable that something like from £30,000 to £35,000 would meet all the demands. But it is impossible to say now with anything like accuracy what is the precise number of cases that will have to be dealt with under the Bill. That is a matter which the arbitrators will have to decide. If the arbitrators are fully seized with the policy of the Bill, no doubt they will come to a right conclusion in all cases that come before them.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What about the new tenants who purchase?

Mr. J. MORLEY : In the case of the new tenants who purchase notices will be served, and if they purchase there is an end of the matter. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), in the article he has published, says—

> "It is a serious thing to have hundreds and thousands of men or women in the position of these poor people. Whatever can be done safely and honourably to relieve the strain ought to be done."

Well, Sir, that is the object of the present proposal, and if this Government did not attempt the task they are now undertaking the problem that has to be solved would still more urgently confront their successors. It has been suggested by the hon. Member that a re-enactment of the 13th section of the Land Purchase Act of 1891 with such Amendments as have been suggested by experience would meet all the necessities of the case. I am somewhat amazed to find hon. Gentlemen using language of that kind, because that section does not work at all, and we have had no experience of how it would work. We have had no experience of what Amendments ought to be made in it. I have thought for a good many months over this difficult and trying question, and I am persuaded that an attempt to solve it on the lines of Section 13 alone, without some such provisions as those introduced to-night, would be worse than futile. All I can say is, that this proposal is brought forward in no spirit of partisanship, and with no desire to give to either Party in this deep and fierce agrarian dispute in Ireland a triumph over the other. It is designed to heal a deep wound in the social condition of Ireland, and in the spirit of healing I commend it to the fair consideration of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to facilitate and make provision for the restoration of Evicted Tenants to their Holdings in Ireland."—(*Mr J. Morley.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) : The closing words of the right hon. Gentleman were not, like some perorations that I have heard in this House, in antagonism to the general tenour of his speech, for from the beginning to end of that speech we all, I think, recognised that he felt the gravity and difficulty of the problem with which he had to deal, and was profoundly alive to the great advantages that would accrue both to the prospects of the Bill in general and the dignity of our discussions upon the subject if, at all events at this early stage of our proceedings, irritating topics were avoided. The right hon. Gentleman has set me an example in that matter that I shall be very careful to follow. I shall not, therefore, say one single word with regard to a subject on which we had very hot disputes about a year ago. I will not even mention the Mathew Commission, and offer no criticism either upon the very distinguished Judge who was at the head of it or anybody else who was connected with its proceedings. Indeed, the Mathew Commission, excepting in so far as the evidence collected by it may have been availed of, appears not to have had very much weight with the right hon. Gentleman in framing his Bill. I rather think his scheme is entirely of his own devising, one to which the Commission he appointed has, I think, had nothing to say. The right hon. Gentleman began, as was only natural, by discussing the methods in which the late Government attempted to deal with the admitted difficulty arising out of the fact that the large number of evicted farms existing in Ireland to which the tenants are anxious to get back undoubtedly constitute, until they get back, a source of public difficulty and danger. The right hon. Gentleman's chief objection to that plan was that, whatever merits Clause 13 of the Land Purchase Act of 1891 might have possessed, it had this one overwhelming demerit, that hardly any tenants and hardly any landlords availed themselves of it, and he said that under these circumstances the Government were forced to construct a new plan which would more effectively carry out the objects the old plan was unable to accomplish. Why has Section 13 failed? The right hon. Gentleman said because only six months were allowed for landlord and tenant to settle, and it is possible that six months was rather too short a period; but I think we must admit that if a serious effort had been made by those who claim, especially in this House and in Ireland, to be the tenants' friends and by the Organisation they so ably control to make that clause a success, an enormous number of settlements would have been come to. I hope I am not doing an injustice to any gentleman, either in or out of the House, when I say that possibly they thought that a too rapid settlement of this question might have been embarrassing to ulterior objects. Whether I am right or wrong in that—and I do not wish to impute motives, at all events on the First Reading of this Bill, or say anything in the nature of embittering controversy—I think it will be admitted that if the whole strength of the Irish Nationalist Organisation had been thrown into making that section a success, undoubtedly the problem which now faces the right hon. Gentleman would long ago have been solved. Before I come to the details of the proposal, I must say one word with regard to his statement touching the peculiarities of Irish land tenure. He said that you must not come to the consideration of a question like this with your minds filled with presuppositions derived from your knowledge of English and Scotch tenure; that we must not talk of landlord and tenant in Ireland as we talk of landlord and tenant in England and Scotland, for by the Act of 1881, Parliament had put the Irish tenant into a position in which he had ceased really to be a tenant and had become a co-partner with the landlord in the soil, and, therefore, said the right hon. Gentleman, "you really must look at him as an owner who has been, unrighteously or hardly to himself, deprived of something in the nature of freehold property." I admit that the tenant has been granted by the Legislature a sort of property, not in the soil, but in his improvements on the soil, which does not obtain in any other part of the Kingdom, except, perhaps, in the crofter districts of Scotland. I do not object to the House keeping this peculiarity of Irish land tenure in mind, but let them recollect other privileges which the Legislature has conferred on those tenants, and which they deliberately refused to exercise when, in obedience to the Plan of Campaign, or for other reasons, they refused to pay rent. The State, in giving the Irish tenant property in his improvements on the soil, gave him no gift the full payment of which he was unable to enforce. On the contrary, the State said—

> "We give you property in the improvements on your farm, and you must pay the rent of that farm. If you do not pay the rent, you go out of the farm, but you do not on that account lose your right of property in your holding. We will protect you from that, and we will give you the right to appeal to the Court and say that full compensation shall be given you for those improvements."

In addition the State said—

> "Every tenant put out of his holding for non-payment of rent has not only a right to the full value of his improvements, but also, if his rent is under £15 a year, will have in addition to all the property we have given him, compensation for disturbance."

How comes it that these tenants did not go to the Court and claim these rights? How is it that tenants evicted for the non-payment of rent have been deprived of their property in the improvements in the soil? Absolutely for no other reason than their own fault, or the bad advice which was given by those who controlled their actions. Therefore, let the House recollect that when we are dealing with these poor tenants, however hard it may have been for them to have been turned out of their holdings, ample provision was made that when turned out they should not lose a single sixpence of the property that we had created in their behalf and transferred to them. If it is lost to them it is by their own default alone. I think that is a matter which is very constantly forgotten by English critics of Irish Land Acts and Irish land tenure. There is no hardship whatever of the kind suggested by the right hon. Gentleman inflicted on these people, unless they themselves choose to refuse that remedy, which we have in no ungenerous spirit contrived for their protection. I now come to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman, with a view to eliciting from the Government explanation on those points which seem defective, and arguments on those points which seem difficult to defend. My first criticism is this, that having, at great cost to the community, already set on foot a Land Commission, which may deal both with fair rents and purchase, we are now erecting side by side with that a new tribunal of three gentlemen to deal not only with fair rent and purchase, but many other difficult questions. I do not say that it would be fair to the Land Commission to throw this work on them —I feel that it would lay them open to suspicion of unfairness from one side or the other, and would throw a burden of responsibility on them that would overweight that great Department. But when you are erecting a Board of Arbitration for three years, who are to settle side by side with the Land Commission, and in the same districts and at the same time, what are fair rents and fair terms of purchase, you run a risk of collision between your temporary and permanent authority, and there is a great danger that you will find these two absolutely independent tribunals settling precisely the same kind of questions on different principles and in different ways. I think you will find that if this new body fixes rents at a lower level than the Land Commission, working in the same place, and at the same period, or if it pledges the taxpayers' money on different terms to those which the Land Commission thinks proper, you will have an amount of discontent aroused against the Land Commission as great as anything likely to be aroused if you made them the tribunal for settling this question. I would like to ask him what precautions are taken—if it is left to his own discretion, or, if not, what precautions are taken to settle these three gentlemen?

Mr. J. MORLEY: That is put in the Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I thank the right hon. Gentleman. I think it is important to consider for one moment what the responsibilities are which you throw upon this Board. To fix fair rents is difficult enough; to fix the terms of purchase is no easy matter; but these two great tasks sink absolutely into insignificance beside the difficult labour which you throw upon this Board in asking them to decide without, apparently, any direction or guide, or signpost as to which way to go—what is or is not a *primâ facie* case which would justify a landlord in getting rid of his tenant, and under what circumstances it would be a great hardship to carry out an eviction. Now just consider how this question would be differently determined by men of undoubted honesty sitting in this House. I have no doubt if you appealed to myself—and I hope I should look at the question, I will not say with impartiality, but with an honest desire to be impartial—and asked me whether I thought the fact that the tenants had joined the Plan of Campaign in the disturbed districts was even a *primâ facie* reason to form a case in favour of their being restored to their farms, I should certainly say precisely the reverse; for I should say that the tenant, who, through difficulties arising from bad seasons or other adverse circumstances, found himself in a position which prevented him from paying his rent and from that cause had been obliged to leave his farm, is a man far more deserving of a public subvention than those gentlemen who engaged in a conspiracy declared to be illegal, and who were not forced into the deplorable position in which they find themselves by their inability to pay rent. That is the decision I should give. But suppose you were to apply to the hon. Member for Waterford, who, I have no doubt, would give his mind, with equal impartiality, to the same difficult problem. He, no doubt, would return an entirely different verdict with regard to what constituted a *primâ facie* case. He would say, as between the two classes of tenants—the unfortunate, and the conspiring tenant—that the conspiring tenant deserved the best of his country. He would say that such a man sacrificed his all in a great national struggle, he was a man ready to brave poverty and all the loss incident to being driven from his ancestral home, not for a selfish object, not because, through his own lack of good farming or mismanagement, he was unable to meet his engagements, but because he was a patriot, and being a patriot, of course, was especially deserving well of the Patriotic Fund, or funds belonging to Ireland, which is to be taxed to meet the requirements of this case. I want to know how these persons whom you are going to appoint are going to steer between these two obstacles? When you set up a Judge you give him laws to carry out and some general principles upon which to administer those laws; but when you set up your tribunal of three men and tell them merely that they are to decide cases according to the circumstances of the locality, and the incidents attending evictions, and decide whether the tenant is to be practically compulsorily put back in his holding, then I venture to say that you are imposing a duty on those men which they will not be able to fulfil without some guidance from the Legislature of this country. I pass from this, which is, after all, a vital portion of the Bill, to the particular method which the right hon. Gentleman has adopted in dealing with the two classes of farms—those which are in the occupation of the landlords, which I understand to be those which are either derelict or being cultivated by the landlords or those which are actually in the cultivation of some tenant or owner who has been introduced since the original eviction. On this I wish to ask a question about the bonus which is to be given, as I understand it, out of funds voted by Parliament?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Not funds voted by Parliament—placed at their disposal by Parliament.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I was wrong—placed at their disposal by Parliament, half out of the Church Fund and half to be secured by the tenant. I venture to put this question to the right hon. Gentleman. How is that compensation to be given to the landlord if the tenant is insolvent, or has no security for the whole of the amount for which he becomes bound under the Bill? In fixing the amount to be paid to the landlord I should like to ask whether this Judicial Commission to which you give Executive functions are or are not to take into account the ability of the tenant to pay his half? Evidently that is a most important matter from the landlords' point of view, and if these three Commissioners are to cut down the whole amount to such a point that the tenant will be able easily to pay his half, it would be obvious that landlords would suffer a very great injury. The landlord of an insolvent tenant would get an amount less than the sum paid by a solvent tenant whose security is good. I ventured to put this question to the right hon. Gentleman at an earlier stage, and he did not answer it. Perhaps he is not able to give an answer to it until the Bill is before us. I hope he will bear it in mind when he comes to speak again in the course of the Debate. I now pass to a more important point. As I understand the plan of the Government, if these new Commissioners, who are asked to decide upon the circumstances of the country and make out a *primâ facie* case for restoring the tenant to his holding, are of opinion that such a case is made out they make a conditional order putting the tenant back into his holding, and an order against which the landlord may appeal. If the appeal is heard, and the landlord's case breaks down, then I understand the tenant is put back into his holding whether the landlord likes it or not; and if the landlord does not elect to purchase, then a fair rent is fixed, not by the Fair Rent Commissioners, but by your Council of three. ["No!"]

Mr. J. MORLEY: The right hon. Gentleman is quite right. The rent is fixed by the Council of three if both the landlord and tenant agree and desire it. If not, then the case has to go before the Land Commissioners.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am obliged for the interruption, but it does not alter the argument I was about to address to the House, and which is this: Under the Act of 1881 a fair rent was only to be demanded by any tenant in Ireland every 15 years. Once it is fixed he has to wait for 15 years before a further rent can be fixed and the value of his holding again revised. This, therefore, may give a very great privilege over the rest of the tenants in Ireland to those particular tenants who are put back in their holdings, whereas the tenant who had a fair rent fixed in 1886 cannot again ask to have a fair rent fixed until the year 1901. The tenant who was evicted in 1886 can have his fair rent fixed in 1894, so that the evicted tenant gains upon his brother tenant.

Mr. SEXTON: He only begins the term.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Let me put it in this way: He first had a fair rent fixed in 1883, and he gets a fair rent re-fixed at a much earlier period than he would have had if he had been an ordinary tenant acting under the Act of 1881. But there is a much more important duty, it strikes me, in connection with this than the difficulty of fixing fair rents. I want to know upon what principle this fair rent is to be fixed? Is it to be upon the condition of the farm after the man has left it, or when he returns to it? The right hon. Gentleman read from the Mathew Commission a very eloquent description of these derelict farms going to waste and practically returning to the original bog. I want to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman desires the rent to be fixed in such cases at something like prairie land value or upon the original condition of the farm when the tenant left it by his own default, presumably through the Plan of Campaign, or any other cause? I think it will make a great difference to the landlords, and it appears to me a very difficult question of equity arises, which we shall have to discuss at some later stage of the Bill. I content myself with signifying the nature of that difficulty, and I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman at the present moment to discuss it. With regard to the scheme of purchase, I will say nothing until I have had time to consider the Bill. When I first heard the right hon. Gentleman's proposal, it certainly appeared to me to be giving privileges to those tenants which many other tenants in Ireland would desire to have and cannot have. I am not at all sure that the point is not a good one—that the option should be left to the landlord, and the landlord alone. I have dealt with the case of derelict farms. I would now like to ask him how will the cases of farms be dealt with which have been cultivated by the landlord since the tenant went out, and have not only been worked at a profit by him, but have been very greatly improved; and farms which were in a bad state when the tenant left and are in a good state at the present time? On what principles are you going to fix the fair rent? I hope the directions will be placed in the Bill, which will be equitable to the landlord, and which will make it obligatory upon the council of three to do justice between the two parties. The right hon. Gentleman has seen, in my judgment very wisely, that it will be absolutely impossible, and this House would never consent that a person should procure one eviction by the carrying out of another; and it would be an intolerable injustice to come down upon a tenant who has been fulfilling his obligations and to say, "You must go away; we have had enough of you; we must put someone in your place," this man being an individual who from want of will or from want of power has failed to pay his rent on a previous occasion. Though the right hon. Gentleman has avoided the difficulty, I think the position of those tenants who have come in will be extremely difficult. You will hold them up to the public opinion of the district in which they are as men who might go under favourable terms from their holdings, but who insist on doing an injustice to the original tenant by hanging on. Probably to the majority of this House such a tenant, in electing to remain in his holding, is one to be commended, one of whom no one has a right to complain; but that will not be the opinion of the man's neighbours, who will use all the legitimate and illegitimate means at their disposal by which pressure, gentle or otherwise, can be applied to induce him to leave the holding. I must say that it would be impossible for any hon. Member to say that this is an illusory danger when we recollect that there are Members of the Party below the Gangway who have actively recommended boycotting for the very purpose of preventing persons from taking evicted farms. I do not know that the right hon. Gentleman can in this Bill remedy this particular danger, and I have no suggestion at the moment to offer; but I hope he will feel that so long as he is responsible for the government of Ireland special precautions against boycotting and intimidation are and will be incumbent on him if he creates a new danger for the class of men whom I believe to be fully entitled to support and protection. So much for the two classes of farms. Following the order of the right hon. Gentleman's explanation, I now come to the amount to be taken from the Irish Church surplus in order to meet the necessities of the Bill. I have two observations to make on that point. First, when I was in Office, and had official means of information on those points, I was assured that the Irish Church surplus was mortgaged up to the hilt. The number of charges upon it were such that, after we had taken the £1,500,000 required for the Congested Board, practically nothing would be left behind. Whether since that time any circumstances have come to the knowledge of the Treasury the right hon. Gentleman will inform me at a later stage of the Bill; but my official advisers at that time informed me that nothing beyond the £1,500,000 was available for any public purpose; and if we are to charge that fund with £100,000, or with a larger sum, and the fund proves to be insufficient to meet the liability, it will be impossible for the British taxpayer to flatter himself that he will get off without having to make up the deficiency. Therefore, it is incumbent on the right hon. Gentleman to show us that circumstances have arisen since 1891 which place the Irish Church Surplus Fund in a more flourishing position than it was before, and which will enable him to draw on resources which I had imagined were exhausted. The second observation I have to make with regard to this fund is that it at once raises the question whether the persons on whose behalf it is to be used are those who deserve to be specially well treated at our hands. I could not deal at length with that subject now without going further into controversial matter than I wish to do at present, but we must recollect the use of this fund is for great public objects, and that to use it as a subvention for the Plan of Campaign tenants is, at all events, an object which was never contemplated by those who originally set apart the fund for the benefit of Ireland as a whole. I use the expression "Plan of Campaign" tenants, because it is evident that the whole tenour of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks shows that he was speaking of nothing but Plan of Campaign tenants; and he quoted 17 estates with regard to which the Mathew Commission took evidence. I glanced hastily through those estates, and I notice that every one of them were Plan of Campaign estates. When we speak of evicted tenants since 1879, are we speaking of Plan of Campaign tenants? The majority of the evicted tenants since 1879 never had anything to do with the Plan of Campaign, and they outnumber by thousands the comparatively insignificant number who were involved in that particular form of political agitation. On this subject the Mathew Commission did not take much evidence. The right hon. Gentleman quoted 2,700 other tenants, not Campaign estate tenants, who had applied to the Mathew Commission to be reinstated; but there is no ground for believing that this number exceeds, or anything like exceeds, the number of tenants now living who have been in occupation of farms since 1879, and who, either for arrears of rent or for other reasons, have ceased to be tenants of those farms. I recollect hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway night after night giving us sensational descriptions of evictions which were taking place in Ireland and which were not on Plan of Campaign estates at all. You cannot both have your cake and eat it; and if the Irish landlords have been evicting at this enormous rate since 1879 you have a problem to deal with very different from the problem in regard to the Plan of Campaign estates. I was astounded to hear the right hon. Gentleman putting us off on this branch of the question by stating the difficulty of getting trustworthy information on this aspect of the question. It is difficult, no doubt, and we do not ask exact particulars and statistics; but the right hon. Gentleman can surely give us some information as to the derelict farms in Ireland, and those which are not derelicts, but from which tenants have been evicted and new tenants have taken their places. Of the 2,700 farms mentioned by the Mathew Commission I know that no fewer than 1,298 have already been occupied by other tenants. Evicted farms are being taken every day, and I know that process has gone on within the last few months with even greater rapidity; and what is £100,000 in the face of such a difficulty? It appears to me, therefore, that the elaborate scheme of the right hon. Gentleman fails, because it has not taken into account the main difficulty with which he has to deal. I agree that if this were a Plan of Campaign difficulty alone, though the ethical and moral questions of the gravest magnitude would come before this House, the financial problem would be insignificant. But if you go beyond the Plan of Campaign, and take into consideration all the farms in Ireland without a tenant, or those in which a tenant has come into occupation since 1879, you are face to face with a question where charity may have more to do with our decision than mere ethical or moral considerations, but undoubtedly you have a financial problem of vast magnitude of which the Government seem to me not to have the slightest idea. With every desire to see this great question settled, I cannot flatter myself or the Government that it is one which will not lead to great discussion and to the necessary raising of problems of the most profound difficulty. I was going into some of the questions that must be raised, and which I will raise on the Second Reading, with regard to the consequences to Irish society of making it plain that persons may indulge in war and have their expenses always paid by their opponents. I should not touch that theme if I believed that the past history of Ireland was never going to repeat itself in the future, or if I thought that we had turned down once for ever that terrible page of agrarian agitation which has been open now for about 15 years, or at least in its most aggravated forms since 1879. But no such hope is held out to us by those in whose hands rests the decision of the question. They tell us in plain terms that when it suits them they will use the old methods for the old objects ; and in face of declarations of that kind I confess that this House will be obliged to pause before it uses public funds and public legislation for the purpose of succouring the wounded soldiers in this species of civil war. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway of both sections in which they are divided have told us over and over again that the Paris fund existed for the very purpose of dealing with those Plan of Campaign tenants. If it exists for that purpose, why then the £100,000 we are asked to vote is to be voted as an addition to the Paris fund. It is a contribution from the House, and nothing else, to the war expenses of a particular section and of a particular party. If that section or party would hold out to us any hope that we have seen an end of these things, and that we need never look for a repetition of it in future, I, for one, would not look too closely either into the amount of money which we are asked to vote or into the merits of those who are to receive it. But if it is—as I fear it is—otherwise, we shall be forced, whether we like it or not, before this Bill becomes law to consider how far we are really contributing to the future peace and social order in Ireland by voting this large subvention in aid of a war which only waits apparently for a favourable moment again to revive.

MR. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, all sections of the Irish Party had listened to the discussion with feelings of great anxiety. There was no section of the Representatives of Ireland in that House who had not a burning interest in the subject introduced by the right hon. Gentleman. Speaking for those with whom he co-operated, he must at this early stage express his extreme disappointment at the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. So far from in any degree settling the question, it would disburb Irish society, and particularly in those places to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. He made bold to say that the proposal just developed to the House was one which must inevitably lead to disorder, contention, and strife, and to an agitation worse than anything which had yet been seen in Ireland. Hon. Members might say that those words were spoken in threat —that he was holding out a threat. Well, Irish Members were pretty well accustomed to that. He had taken a prominent part in agitation in Ireland, but nobody could say that he had used his position for the purpose of fomenting disorder or to create strife between Parties. What was the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman ? He left entirely untouched the entire turning point of the evicted tenants' question. With regard to the derelict farms, they had a proposal for arbitration, but that was just the direction in which arbitration was scarcely necessary. A little accommodation and arrangement of the clause for the purchase of land would enable those two parties to come together. The real difficulty and crucial point in the Irish case was the number of farms occupied throughout the country from which others had been evicted. The proposal made was a mere tinkering with the question, and would give additional incentive to crime and disorder so long as the question of the farms taken since eviction was not touched. The Irish Members made a proposal some time ago on this subject, and the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues voted in favour of the Bill. They had come fresh from their declarations at the General Election. The Bill contained a proposal dealing with these farms taken after eviction, and the only objection—the only reservation—made with regard to those cases was made by the Secretary for Scotland, who said—

> "The Purchase Bill has not fulfilled its main object of pacifying Ireland, which would never be done unless justice was shown to the 5,000 or 6,000 evicted men."

The then proposal was that the occupation of farms by those planters should be under the consideration of the tribunal ; that they should be taken compulsorily. That was the Bill that the right hon. Gentleman supported, but now the mere fact that a man was in possession, by whatever title—whether his occupation was *bonâ fide* or not, whether he was a bogus tenant or not, although there might be collusion between him and the landlord—however unsubstantial his occupation might be, he had merely to raise the question of occupancy, and there was no longer any possibility of the man who was evicted from the holding having any hope of getting back. What did it point to? It said plainly to the evicted tenant—If you do not make the situation uncomfortable for the man who has the farm, if you and your hundreds do not drive them out. if public opinion is not strong enough, and your Organisations sufficiently powerful to expel him from the farms, there is no hope for you. That was the message of the Bill, and he implored the right hon. Gentleman, if he wished to see the question satisfactorily settled, to seriously reconsider the proposal he had made to the House. As one who knew Ireland better than the right hon. Gentleman, he would tell him that the Bill, so far from settling the question, would raise contention between men who had hitherto acted together in Ireland, and even among the evicted tenants themselves, and was likely to cause bad blood and friction between them. From the observations he had heard that night, it would appear as if there was a sincere desire to close the controversy. If so, why did not the House approach it in that spirit and with that desire? The arbitrators were to be appointed to merely settle cases of holdings which were vacant. But they were the least important; they would give the least trouble. When they were vacant, what was wanted was a Board of Arbitrators. Why should the man who had been evicted not have the same right as the man who had been evicted and whose farm was vacant? These were the cases which disturbed the entire social life of Ireland. The evicted tenant who saw that his farm was not profitable in the hands of the landlord was not excited about it. He believed that the time would come when the landlord would be glad to have him back. The man they should be most desirous of preserving from crime was the man whose farm had been taken and was worked before his eyes by one who was serving the interests of a political Organisation and whose tenancy was not real. There were cases of the kind which were perfectly notorious. Let them suppose that on a certain estate there were ten farms—seven of which had been taken after eviction by colourable tenants, and three were vacant. The Board of Arbitrators had the power of dealing with the last-mentioned, but the remaining seven were left untouched. The sham tenant could bar the whole proceeding. He was there for the purpose of supporting and maintaining the landlord's side of the controversy. What he wished to point out was that so far from diminishing the tendency to take farms in violation of the settled principles of the people, and the agreement of their combinations, the Bill actually held out an inducement to the land grabbers to occupy every evicted farm in Ireland they could get. Where the entire thing stopped short was, that it seemed to have been devised with regard to a few particular farms in Ireland, and no doubt it would give some section in the House an opportunity of redeeming pledges to certain districts in Ireland, but it was not a proposal which would settle the question. When they suggested that compulsory powers should be extended to farms which had been taken, they made no provision for compensating the tenant in possession, and that was the sole objection taken to the scheme by the right hon. Gentleman and his Party. There would be some reason in the right hon. Gentleman's proposal if he had introduced the question of compensating those men—if he gave the Board of Arbitrators power to consider all those tenancies, and, where they were *bonâ fide*, give compensation. But the right hon. Gentleman had not touched the fringe of the question, and it would have been better for the Government and for the people of Ireland if he had never made the proposal that night, for when it was read on the morrow, and when it was seen that the man who had taken an evicted farm was the man for whom the law had special regard beyond the evicted tenant—that his position was regarded as sacred under the Bill, that no portion of the measure was to be offered to the man who had felt the effect of the change, there would be intense disappointment in Ireland. If the right hon. Gentleman wished to keep Ireland in its present condition of peace he would endeavour to apply his Bill to all classes of evicted tenants, at least in the same degree. There was no intention or wish to be unreasonable in this matter, but they would be unworthy of claiming kinship with their unfortunate people if they did not now take their part. His language was that of warning, and he told the right hon. Gentleman that so far from settling the question in any appreciable degree, his proposal, if persisted in, would, if possible, render worse the condition of the evicted tenants in Ireland, and the condition of that country less peaceful than it had hitherto been.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he did not think it would be fair, and it certainly would not be safe, to take any pronounced stand upon this Bill at the present stage. That was one thing he was not going to do, but another was that he would not embarrass the right hon. Gentleman in any way in his attempt to deal with and settle this question, nor did he intend to express any adverse opinion with regard to the measure which the right hon. Gentleman had introduced. The right hon. Gentleman had done him the honour of quoting certain observations of his which had appeared in an article he had written, published in one of the magazines; and he now avowed that he should be prepared to sacrifice many of the views he held if he could see that by so doing he was conducing to a fair and honourable solution of this vexed question. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that nothing he had previously said upon this subject would prevent him from supporting such portions of this Bill as he found himself conscientiously able to support. He, however, did not think that the right hon. Gentleman had given the House the information he might have done which would have guided them in this matter. There were perhaps a few hon. Members who had studied this subject with some care, and who knew what it meant, and what it involved, but the great majority of hon. Members had no conception of the extent of the evil to be met. The right hon. Gentleman had treated the question that night too much as though it applied only to the Plan of Campaign tenants. The facts of the case were these. There were 980 Plan of Campaign tenants to be dealt with, but 2,765 applications for reinstatement had been sent in to the Mathew Commission. That, however, was not all, because he had ascertained that since the right hon. Gentleman had taken office 836 tenants had been evicted from their holdings in Ireland, making a total of nearly 4,000 evicted tenants.

Mr. REDMOND: That is not nearly all.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL fully admitted that the numbers he had given were not complete, but in such a case what use would £100,000 be in view of the problem that had to be solved? In plain terms such a sum "would not look at it." What did the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman amount to? As he understood the first part of that proposal, it was to the effect that the old tenants might be put back by the arbitrators upon certain conditions and terms, but that in case of the landlord objecting to their being so replaced—and what landlord would not object—why should he not? He had been defrauded by his tenants. Then the tenants would be forced to purchase. The right hon. Gentleman had taken much credit to himself for proposing to release the landlord in such cases from providing the guarantee deposit. He had always thought it very hard upon the landlord that he should have been forced to provide the deposit for the benefit of the tenant who had defrauded him. The Chief Secretary said that, taking the whole period from the Ashbourne Act down to now, the guarantee deposit had only been drawn upon to the extent of £2,000, and that that was most satisfactory. But they must remember that these were solvent tenants; and did the right hon. Gentleman mean to tell him it was the same thing to compare these solvent tenants, who had approved security behind them, with those evicted tenants who had not a farthing, and that taking the evicted tenants the security would exist if they removed the guarantee deposit? No one could maintain that and those hon. Gentlemen behind the Chief Secretary, who quarrelled with the security of the tenants under the Ashbourne Act, could not be comfortable in their minds when they looked forward to these bankrupt tenants being forced on the State as purchasers. He said this was a serious position for the right hon.

Gentleman to get into. Let them look at the condition of these tenants, and he had seen hundreds of them in their sad extremity. In the first place, the land was waste and derelict in a great number of cases; the houses had been thrown down or gone to decay, and were probably non-existent; the people had been living on doles served out to them; and he asked the House were these people to be forced on the State as purchasers under this arrangement? Where was the security for the State? Was it in the land that was derelict or in the people who were bankrupt? He did not believe it possible to carry out this transaction, and he should look with anxiety for the Bill to see how it could be done with safety for the State. He asked the same question as was asked by the hon. Member for the Harbour Division (Mr. Harrington), Was this Bill likely to settle the problem? No, it would not. He was of opinion that if they could not settle it wholly they had better not attempt to settle it at all. This was not a case where half a loaf was better than no bread, and he would tell the House why. There were admittedly 1,500 new tenants created on the land, and it was also admitted the Chief Secretary could not evict these 1,500 new tenants. [*Cries of* "Why?"] The idea of stopping eviction by carrying out fresh evictions! He held it was utterly impossible for any Government to propose to evict 1,500 well-to-do tenants in order to put 1,500 bankrupt men in their places. If they left these men there, the 1,500 men in the houses and the 1,500 out of the houses, he wanted to know what would be the condition of affairs? The difficulty arose from the Government trying to do an impossible thing. Take the 1,500 tenants who were not to be removed unless with their own consent, and after the remainder had been reinstated in their holdings what was likely to be the fate of the 1,500 new tenants—would their lives be likely to be happy? He saw the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) opposite. What had the hon. Gentleman done in the past with regard to this—what was he doing every day? Was not the hon. Gentleman calling upon the people to boycott the land-grabber, and how was he to sit quietly by and allow these 1,500 new tenants to remain in possession and the old tenants to remain out? What settlement was that? He said that was an absolutely impossible position of affairs to bring about, and it would be worse than things were now. Everyone of them would be exposed to boycotting and to crime of every kind, and he did not think he could ever bring himself to consent to a thing that would run such a risk as that. He said that was what they would be doing, and he said so after the speeches of the hon. Member for Mayo, not in the forgotten past but no later than last week. Now he came to the question of the funds. £100,000 he had said would not look at the solution of this difficulty from a financial standpoint, but of all the monstrous proposals ever made the proposal to arrest the Church Fund for a purpose like this was the worst and he did not think it had been equalled. He heard the Debate on the Irish Church question a very long time ago; he heard it from the Gallery of the House, and he remembered the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian saying that the surplus ought to be devoted to the work of charity and for the relief of idiots and lunatics. He wondered whether it was under that principle the Chief Secretary thought of the Church Surplus Fund. In the last Parliament he remembered the late Chief Secretary for Ireland proposed to take £100,000 of that fund for the endowment of sectarian education in Ireland. He could remember he gave the right hon. Gentleman considerable trouble about it, and had to keep the House sitting two mornings until 5 o'clock—[*Cries of* "Obstruction!"] Yes, it was obstruction, but it was justifiable obstruction and was obstruction of his own Party, and if the Irish Unionist Members would not consent to allow the Irish Church surplus to be used for sectarian education, they would certainly fight most strongly against its being used for the reward of roguery, robbery, and wrong-doing. He said that as these evictions had been carried out under the protection of British soldiers, British bayonets, and British law, Great Britain should take the responsibility and the fund should come from British sources. Let the Government go with their demand to the British taxpayer, and see what he had to say to it. It was proposed in the Bill to advance £50, at least there was to be an advance up to the extent of £50 to each tenant, at the pleasure of the arbitrator, to rebuild the houses. Here was a derelict farm, an ex-tenant who was a pauper, a house in ruins, and not one farthing to purchase stock or anything else for the farm, and the Chief Secretary proposed these three gentlemen—he hoped they would not be like Mr. Justice Mathew's Commission—should have power of giving £50 to these poor tenants to rebuild the house, re-cultivate the land and stock the farm. He therefore said they might at once get rid of the idea of £100,000, which would not look at it, and they must raise their ideas very considerably if they wished to settle the evicted tenants question. The next question he asked was, where was this to stop? They were to begin on the 1st May, 1879, which was what he called the Land League period. He admitted the right hon. Gentleman was right in beginning there, for he had the 13th section of the Land Act to support him, but beginning there, where was the right hon. Gentleman going to stop? He could understand it if the right hon. Gentleman proposed now to come down and abolish the process of ejectment for rent altogether; but he asked—and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reply before the close of the Debate—where he intended this policy to stop, because evictions were going on every day? These tenants, who were to be treated in this way, who were to get compensation, were men in the main who resisted the law and conspired to defraud their landlords. He put opposite them the evictions going on every day of men who were unfortunate in the business of agriculture, who could not make both ends meet, who could not pay their rent and went out of their farms without resistance to the law, and who took their chance in a bleak world. They were going to reward those who broke the law, and they were going to allow those who were peaceable to be turned out to starve. He desired to say, and it was the last thing he had to say, that he saw enormous difficulty in the way, and that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, by not grappling with the whole question and endeavouring to settle it as a whole, ran an enormous risk of making the question worse than it was at the present moment. He had spoken now on the faith of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, but when the Bill was printed he should be quite prepared to give it the consideration it deserved, apart from the one point respecting the Church surplus.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I desire to make some observations on the Bill introduced by the Chief Secretary, particularly in view of one speech which has come from those Benches, and also because I have for a long time been connected with the cause of the evicted tenants in Ireland, and therefore I think I should not allow any further time to elapse without saying a few words. I have no intention of doing what I think is a very inconvenient thing to do in this House, and that is to attempt to discuss a measure the full details of which are not before us; but, in my humble judgment, the spectacle which has been presented to this House for the last hour of the Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. Harrington) uniting with the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) in mangling——

Mr. HARRINGTON: No, no!

Mr. DILLON: I use the expression in no offensive sense; but I say the spectacle of the Member for the Harbour Division uniting with the Member for South Tyrone in mangling and trying to blacken this Bill almost before it has had time to see the light of day, will I think, on the whole, have the effect of convincing the evicted tenants of Ireland that the Bill contains valuable provisions. That is my opinion, and therefore I shall, for the present, reserve an opinion as to certain details. But I do say, so far as I have been able to gather from the extremely clear statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that the Bill is an extremely valuable Bill. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House at any very great extent in dealing with the speeches to which we have just listened; but there are some points which have been raised in the course of the discussion to which I think I ought to advert. First of all, I will address myself to the attitude adopted towards this Bill by the Leader of the Opposition and to the attitude adopted towards it by the Member for South Tyrone. The Leader of the Opposition used language with reference to this Bill which was certainly intended to avoid contention, and so far as was possible he avoided contentious matters. I am bound to say that the excellent rule which he laid down at the opening of his observations apparently had no effect on his friend and ally the Member for South Tyrone, for there was not a single point of an angry or contentious character which the Member for South Tyrone did not raise in his usual peculiarly acrimonious manner. I will first allude to a few points which were put by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. The hon. Member assumed that in all cases the landlord would object to receive back the old tenants, and he put his case in this way. He said—"Why should a landlord who has got rid of a bankrupt tenant not desire to keep him out of the holding, and all the more in the case where he was a planter in the holding? Because," he said, "in these 1,500 cases where there are new tenants on the holdings it will stand to reason that the landlord, having got rid of a bankrupt tenant, will prefer to keep the solvent tenant."

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: My observation could not have applied to the 1,500 tenants. They only applied to cases where the land is derelict.

Mr. DILLON: I beg the hon. Member's pardon, but he did use the language which I have quoted, for I took down his words at the time. He did ask why should a landlord get rid of 1,500 solvent tenants in order to get back 1,500 insolvent tenants? These are the very words he used. Allow me to tell the hon. Member that in my experience in Ireland—and I think it is at least as wide as that of the hon. Member, or of the hon. Member for the Harbour Division—the landlords who have got planters upon their farms are not all in love with them. I have come across innumerable instances where the planters are paying no rent, or else paying less than half of what the old tenant was paying; and I am convinced, dealing for a moment with this question of 1,500 planters, that a large number of them are bogus tenants, are not real tenants, are not paying a fair rent to the landlord, and are simply kept on these farms for the purpose of combating the agitation in Ireland. Now I turn for a moment to the observations of the hon. Member for South Tyrone. He said that of course the landlord would refuse to take back tenants who had attempted to defraud him in the past. Is there any ground for that supposition? I say the whole history of the past 10 years proves quite the contrary. Take one for example, the case of the Ponsonby Estate, one of the cases where probably there has been the largest clearance in the whole of Ireland. It is a well known fact that Mr. Ponsonby was anxious to take back his tenants, and only for the interference of the hon. Member for South Hunts (Mr. Smith-Barry) the whole transaction would have been closed long ago. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] That is a perfectly notorious fact. In view of this fact, and I myself have taken part in many transactions of this character, I say there is not the smallest shadow of foundation for the statement of the hon. Member. The hon. Member makes the assumption throughout the whole of his speech that the landlords will regard the men who went into those evictions as men who attempted to defraud them. These were combinations for the sake of getting a reduction of rent, and if the hon. Member assumes that every combination in Ireland having for its object the reduction of rents was an attempt to defraud, then I say he condemns the entire late Tory Administration as defrauders. I take an entirely different view of this case. I say that in the case of a number of landlords in Ireland who have derelict farms on their hands that the landlords would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of taking back the old tenants who would pay their rents. I shall deal briefly with what this Bill will do for the Irish tenants. The evicted tenants in Ireland are divided into two classes. First, there are farms which are still derelict or in the occupation of the landlord or anyone acting on his behalf. In those cases it is admitted by all critics who profess to have an interest in restoring those tenants to those holdings that this Bill will be fairly satisfactory. Therefore, I may say that the criticisms which have come from those who spoke on behalf of the evicted tenants are practically confined to the second portion of the Bill, which deals with tenants whose holdings have been let to new tenants. I take first this fact, that I do not consider that the arbitrators shall be actually debarred from inquiring as to whether a man actually living in the house is legally in possession or not, and I do not think that those who are simply caretakers to the landlords, as many of those alleged tenants are, would be entitled to claim possession. That is evidently a point of detail for future consideration. Take the case of holdings which are *bonâ fide* in the possession of a new tenant. These are admitted to be the smaller number of the holdings with which this Bill will deal. I believe from the very wide experience of this whole business that in the case of a great majority of those new tenants, who are known by the name of planters, they would avail themselves of the provisions which are proposed in this Bill, giving them compensation and allowing them to give up those holdings. I believe, as regards a good many of those new tenants, they are not making a profit out of their holdings, and I believe they are not paying their rents regularly, that the landlords are in many instances anxious to get rid of them, and that they would be ready to go if they got reasonable compensation. Many of these men are notoriously men without any actual knowledge of farming at all, and who were brought there for the purpose of fighting the agitation. I remember a saying, almost classical now, of the agent of Lord Lansdowne when he went to Ulster to try and get planters for the Luggacurren Estates. He came back without his planters, and what did he say? He said—

> "When I went to Ulster I found plenty of pluck and plenty of money, and I found that the men who had pluck had no money, and the men who had money had no pluck."

The men who went on those farms as planters had nothing to lose, and everything to gain, and therefore were a very unsatisfactory class for a landlord to have. Therefore, I hold that that portion of the problem is not at all such a large one as has been attempted to be made out, but is one which, to a very large extent, could be settled by this Bill in a friendly way. I now come to the observations of the Leader of the Opposition. He is the man in this House who is to say whether there is to be peace in this matter or not, on his head rests the real responsibility; and I listened with a degree of pleasure and some hope to the reception which he gave to this Bill. He put this point, and I would ask his attention to it. He asked what is to be the fate of these planters if they are induced to give up the holdings of which they are now in possession. Said the right hon. Gentleman—

> "They will be held up to the odium and hatred of their neighbours, and it will be incumbent on the Government to protect them."

Of course, it is incumbent on the Government to protect them. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has exposed himself to some criticism in Ireland for the care he has taken in the protection of these men. I would put this to the Leader of the Opposition. What is to be the fate of these planters if nothing is done to settle this question? Is it only because they refuse to fall in with the present arrangements that they will be held up to the odium of their neighbours? He himself blames us for condemning land-grabbing. In doing so we are giving voice to the deep-rooted sentiments of the Irish people. If we did not do so probably much more violent means would be resorted to for the purpose of putting an end to land-grabbing, and I repeat that by condemning land-grabbing in this House and on platforms in Ireland we are giving voice to sentiments which no Coercion Act can ever eradicate from the masses of the Irish people, and in doing so we are imposing upon them an amount of patience and restraint which he and other statesmen have been unable to impose. Supposing there is no proposition made by the Executive Government in Ireland for dealing with these cases of the planters, I ask the right hon. Gentleman what is his proposal for the future of Ireland? He knows Ireland very well and fought very hard there, and fought with a good deal of courage. [An hon. MEMBER: And success.] That remains to be seen; we think we have had some success also, but I shall not enter into that question at present. But supposing the present Administration was thrown out of Office, and that this Bill was not passed, does the right hon. Gentleman imagine for a moment that even if Members like myself lost our seats in Parliament this question will not cross his path, or the path of any other Minister who is responsible for the Government of Ireland? I say it will be there, and must be faced and must be dealt with by any Minister responsible for public order in Ireland. I say that, in my opinion, there is no force and no weight in the objection which the right hon. Gentleman has made—namely, that this Bill might have a tendency to hold up to the odium of their neighbours planters in Ireland who would not leave their holdings. On the contrary, it affords a means to the planters, many of whom are only too anxious to get away, if they can only do so without loss of money, to give up the holdings to the old occupants. I turn for a moment to the speech of the hon. Member for the Harbour Division. He condemns this Bill, and says it will leave the condition of Ireland worse than it has been in the past. What does the hon. Gentleman propose to do for those evicted tenants?

Mr. HARRINGTON: I will tell the hon. Gentleman, if he will allow me. I simply advise the tenants to follow the former plan of the hon. Gentleman, to get the tenants to hold together, and not to take advantage of this Bill until they see there is a settlement for them all. That is the policy which the hon. Gentleman followed when I was co-operating with him in Ireland.

Mr. DILLON: I know a good deal about the condition of the evicted tenants in Ireland. I do not think there is any man in this House who has been so closely identified with them for several years past as I have been. I know there are 1,500 families who, but for the relief given from month to month by a committee of which I am secretary, would be long ago in the workhouses of Ireland. I speak for these families, and I say were it not for our Party and for the exertions we have made these men would not now be even in a position to claim the redemption of their holdings. I say the man who renders difficult the passing of this Bill, or throws any obstacle in its way, will be taking upon his head a very heavy responsibility. Unquestionably, in my judgment, this Bill, if it were passed in its present shape—and we all recognise that if it is to be passed through this House and through the House of Lords there must be more give and take, and, of course, if I were to draft an Evicted Tenants Bill I would draft it on different lines; but we cannot expect that a Minister of the Government will come down to this House with a Bill such as a Leader of the Plan of Campaign would draft—but I say that in my judgment this Bill, if it were passed, would support at least three-fourths or four-fifths of the evicted tenants of Ireland, and put them back in their homes. It would support the most difficult and most distressing cases. There may be a fringe that it would not touch, and I repeat, knowing as I do know the terrible conditions of these people, and the desperate necessities which surround the future in Ireland if they are left in their present unsettled state, that the man who would take upon himself the responsibility of getting this Bill rejected will take upon his head an enormous responsibility, because he will have to take upon his shoulders the duty of supporting 2,000 or 3,000 families, who, by means of this Bill, would be restored to their homes. According to the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member for South Tyrone this Bill will not settle the question. Well, let them draft a Bill that will settle the question. If they do I will admit they have achieved a task which has not yet been accomplished by any man that ever sat in this House, and that they are the greatest statesmen of the century. It is no reproach to any statesman or to the modern Liberal Party that they are unable by a single Bill to settle all the accumulated evils of all the agrarian wars in Ireland for two and a half centuries past. I believe in my heart it is beyond the power of this House ever to settle the Irish Land Question finally. You can only work in this House from hand to mouth. You can only pass Bills which will meet the emergency of the moment, or settle a question for a year or two. Bill after Bill has been passed by Tory Government and by Liberal Government, and yet the Irish land problem remains unsolved. This Bill, no doubt, will not settle the whole questions. It will not settle in their homes the tenants who are to be evicted next year, who are now under notice of eviction; it will not deal with the 40,000 tenants who have been cut out from the benefits of the Land Acts by the eviction-made-easy clause, passed by the Leader of the present Opposition in 1887. It will not produce an arcadia in Ireland, nor bring on the millennium. But I will tell you what it will do. It will return to their homes, in my humble judgment, 2,000 or 3,000 families in Ireland who are at this moment a source of embarrassment and danger and difficulty to the Government of the country. It will, in my judgment, if it is passed, restore to their homes a number of families, who are at present in despair and threatened with starvation, and who have been evicted, whether you think rightly or wrongly—in the opinion of their neighbours, and that is the important point after all—have been evicted, in the opinion of their countrymen and neighbours, unjustly. I appeal most solemnly to the House and to gentlemen who propose to reject this Bill to remember what the effect has been in Ireland of a year and a-half of fair treatment, and of the effect of hope in the present *régime*. It has been made a matter of reproach to the Government, not lately I will say, by the Leader of the Opposition, but by some Conservative Members, that the present Government is governing Ireland by hope. After all, is not hope a better thing to govern the country with than Coercion and police? I appeal to this House, since the effects on Ireland has been so encouraging and so delightful, I would say to every section of the House of the Administration of the Chief Secretary during the last 18 months, that you will not deny him these means, which he asks. For my part I will say this, that as far as I can understand it, and speaking for the Irish people, that this Bill, even if it do not completely and finally settle the Irish Land Question, it will be, if it is passed, a most potent and powerful instrument in the hands of the Executive to maintain that peace and quiet which have been so prevalent of late in Ireland.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, that he felt that it would not be prudent at that early time to express a final judgment on the proposals of the Chief Secretary, but speaking generally, he recognised, as every Member of the House must recognise, that the right hon. Gentleman had made a sincere attempt at a settlement. He also hoped that it would also prove a practical attempt. Whilst it was gratifying to find that the object of the Bill had such wide sympathy in the House—he could not but feel that its success would depend not a little on the three men chosen to be the arbitrators, and still more on the spirit in which the proposals were received by the landlords in Ireland and by the tenants. If the friends of the landlords did not impress on them the desirability of being reasonable, and if the friends of the tenants did not impress on them the desirability of helping as far as they could, all attempts to settle the difficulty would be vain, and foolish, and futile. But he felt quite certain, however, that if those who had influence with the landlords or the tenants would use their best efforts to bring the two classes together, the House might look with hope to the operations of the Bill. They might say this with respect to the whole reception of the Bill: the success of the measure would altogether depend on whether they had reasonable or unreasonable conduct in Ireland. He hoped, therefore, that all who had influence in the matter would try to ensure that the conduct should be reasonable, and if that were done the country might look with hope to the results of this measure, and might trust to its effecting a large settlement of the present difficulties. Surely, everyone must admit at the outset that there was considerable motive to induce them to do their best in the matter. What was the situation? There was a ragged cloud of witnesses in Ireland betokening the existence of an evil spirit, approaching to civil war in the past, and the continued existence of which constituted a threat of a renewal of civil war in the future. If they wished to effect a permanent and peaceful settlement they must do their best to abate the feeling of illtreatment in the past. Such a course would be desirable in the interest of Ireland and in the interest of all Parties; and it was certainly most desirable in the interest of those who thought that there might be a change of Administration in the near future that the question should be settled, for, in whatever difficulties this band of dispossessed tenants might involve the present Government, any future Government, with a different political complexion, would be placed in infinitely worse difficulties. That was a motive, surely, that should be sufficient to make them disposed to enter into a discussion of this problem without desiring to renew the old forces of disorder, or aggravate or rekindle fires that might be for the moment dormant. It had been said, indeed, that the problem was much larger in extent than the Chief Secretary had said. That might be very likely true, but he was inclined to think that a disposition to curtail the dimensions of the problem could be developed so as to make it very much more reduced than it seemed. After all a landlord did not like to have derelict land on his hands, and although the present year was a very good one in Ireland no doubt many Irish landlords found it extremely unprofitable to work their own land. I would prefer to have some tenants and get some rents. With regard to the planters, he could not say whether they would insist upon their rights to remain upon their holdings or not; but he entirely concurred in the view of the Chief Secretary, that it was impossible to dispossess them against their will. He entirely agreed with the proposition that it was impossible to dispose, without their assent, of those who cultivated farms as planters, and he did not think that the Legislature, however well inclined it might be towards the evicted tenant, would ever listen to a suggestion of that kind. He, therefore, deprecated any violent expulsion of new tenants in order to put back old tenants. It was quite possible, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo had said, that many of these planters would be well pleased, on receiving compensation, to relinquish their holdings. But even if they insisted upon remaining, and were exposed to all the odium of which they were warned, if not threatened, by the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. Harrington) the situation would be much changed by the planters who were willing to go giving up their farms. Be that as it might, he thought the Bill, if it became law, would do much to restore agrarian peace in Ireland. The whole working out of the scheme depended on the spirit in which it would be taken up by those who had influence in Ireland. The arbitrators would have to consider whether the tenant on one side or the landlord on the other was unreasonable. The success of the scheme depended on whether there was reasonable or unreasonable conduct in Ireland, and reasonable or unreasonable conduct on the part of those who were able to influence public conduct in Ireland; but he did hope that on both sides the matter would be treated in a conciliatory and reasonable spirit, and that those who possessed influence would try and make that spirit prevail.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.) said, he would not have risen at all were it not for the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo. That hon. Member had said that great responsibility would rest upon the head of any person who did anything to interfere with the passage of the Bill. He agreed with the hon. Member, but he should add that he thought that his speech had contributed more heat to the question than anything else which had taken place during the Debate. The hon. Member for East Mayo had simply made an attack on the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin. He had said that that hon. Member was uniting with the hon. Member for South Tyrone in attempting to wreck the Bill. The hon. Member knew perfectly well when using that unworthy sneer that the hon. Member for the Harbour Division had given quite as much time, and risked quite as much, and suffered quite as much in the interests of the evicted tenants as the hon. Member for East Mayo. The hon. Member had also spoken in sneering tones of those who "pretended" to be the friends of Ireland. He did not know whether the hon. Member referred to him and those who were associated with him, but if so he could only say that at the time when the Member for East Mayo required people to show their friendship for the evicted tenants by standing by his side in many a struggle and following him to prison, it was men like the hon. Member for the Harbour Division to whom he looked, and not to many of those newer friends who sat around him that day. The hon. Member spoke about uniting with the hon. Member for South Tyrone, but he knew perfectly well that the hon. Member for South Tyrone approached the discussion of the measure from quite a different point of view. The hon. Member for South Tyrone showed clearly in his speech that he did not desire to see the question settled at all. He posed as the friend of the tenant since his constituents had urged upon him the question of land in Ireland. But he was not entitled to speak on behalf of the tenants or any considerable section of people interested in this Bill in Ireland, and they knew perfectly well that in making his speech the hon. Member for South Tyrone did so for the purpose of throwing obstacles in the way of any settlement of the question at all. Therefore, the suggestion of union between the hon. Member for South Tyrone and the hon. Member for the Harbour Division was one which should not have been uttered. He sympathised to a great extent with the right hon. Gentleman in having to deal with this matter at all; but he asked, how could they be anything but disappointed at his action when they remembered that he supported the Bill which dealt almost principally with the question of planters, and now absolutely refused to touch the question? It was because he thought the best way of dealing with the Chief Secretary was to speak plainly that he told him it was his conviction that the difficulty of the evicted tenants' question was in the fact of these farms being taken. No doubt it would be an excellent thing to reinstate people in farms now vacant, but if people were put into every derelict farm to-morrow there would still remain tremendous difficulty if the planters were not dealt with. Did the right hon. Gentleman really think that peace and order would be restored to neighbourhoods in which one tenant was reinstated while another tenant at the other side of the ditch or across the road was left out of his farm because it was occupied by a planter from the North of Ireland? The right hon. Gentleman would not settle the question. On the contrary, he believed the Chief Secretary would by this Bill raise an agitation against land grabbing — against the practice of taking farms from which people had been evicted — which would be of a very dangerous character. The feelings of the man who saw his farm taken, his children on the roadside, and a stranger under his roof would be very bitter. The greatest check upon outrages during the last few years had been the belief that when the Government came into power the question would be dealt with, the new tenants got rid of by compensation, and the old ones restored. It was not because the people were less bitter that they were now quiet; it was because men like the hon. Member for Mayo had encouraged the hope that land grabbing and the planters would be dealt with on the lines of Mr. O'Kelly's Bill, and that all the evicted without exception would be restored to their homes. But when the proposals of the Bill became known in Ireland, there would be great disappointment. To-morrow the people whose farms had been taken and occupied would say, "The Government will do nothing for us." What would be the effect? It would bring despair and dismay to the hearts of all these people who had seen their land grabbed. What would they say? Why, "Our neighbours who were evicted but whose lands were not grabbed have been put back, but the Government will do nothing for us." He trusted that these people in their despair would not take the law into their own hands; but if he were an Irish tenant who had seen his land grabbed, and had been encouraged by Irish Members of Parliament to believe that when a Liberal Government came into power the planters would be dispossessed, and he would get back his old home, he should be very bitter at heart indeed if he were told that nothing at all in that direction was to be done for him. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was in a very difficult position, and he (Mr. W. Redmond) could not help expressing a certain amount of sympathy with him, but the right hon. Gentleman must know that when one in his own position deliberately walked into the Division Lobby to vote in support of a proposal by an Irish Member to deal with the planters, and put the tenants back into their holdings, the circumstances carried great weight with the people in Ireland. He must know that it was a dangerous thing to disappoint the people of Ireland in that way. No doubt the evicted tenants to-morrow would say, "Why, he voted for Mr. O'Kelly's Bill to put us back on our farms, but now that he has the opportunity of dealing with this very subject he makes no effort to restore us." It was not that he (Mr. W. Redmond) was not anxious for some such Bill as this to become law. He was anxious. Everyone who lived in Ireland must be anxious to have the evicted tenants restored and to have this matter settled, but they wished to see it settled in a manner that would prove real and lasting. He trusted that pressure would be put on the Government, when the Bill was in Committee, to make it a more satisfactory measure, and he should be very much surprised if the whole of the Irish Nationalists did not join in bringing that pressure to bear. It might be said that it would be difficult to deal with men who had taken farms and settled on them, but it did not seem, to his mind, more difficult to do that than to appoint three men to say that in other cases evicted tenants should be put back. He trusted that in Committee the Bill would be amended so as to provide for the reinstatement of those evicted tenants whose land had been grabbed.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) said, there was no one who had a knowledge of Ireland who did not commiserate with the right hon. Gentleman in the varied troubles and difficulties he had to face. Probably not the least of the present troubles with which he had to contend was the Bill he had introduced to-night. The right hon. Gentleman's position after hearing the speeches of the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin, the hon. Member for East Clare, and the hon. Member for East Mayo, reminded him (Mr. Dane) very forcibly of an expression in somewhat common use in portions of Ireland—namely, "He is between the Devil and the deep sea," though in this case it would be more correct to say that the right hon. Gentleman was between several devils and the deep sea. But whilst he commiserated with the right hon. Gentleman and shared with him to some extent the sympathy he had expressed for the evicted tenants in Ireland, he was bound to say he did not go as far as the right hon. Gentleman in that direction. He had no sympathy for the evicted tenants on the Campaign estates. He could have no sympathy with tenants who, being well able to pay their rents, allowed themselves to be led away by agrarian agitators, who made their livelihood out of the agitation. Beyond all doubt, on those estates the tenants were not only well-to-do, but perfectly capable of paying their rents if they had only acted up to the standard of honest men. One of the 17 Campaign estates was that of the nobleman who till lately had held the office of Governor General of India. That estate was situated in Queen's County. A person might travel the whole of Ireland without finding a more flourishing and contented estate than this. But the professional agitators went down to the estate and got hold of the tenantry, with the result that, so far as the Roman Catholic tenantry were concerned, they were forced into joining the Plan of Campaign. It was undoubtedly a fact that on that estate of Lord Lansdowne not a single Protestant out of a great number of Protestant tenants on it joined the Plan of Campaign—and this was an observation which applied, if not to all tenants on Plan of Campaign estates, at all events to the vast majority of them. He found that the Report of the Mathew Commission went very fully into the affairs of the Plan of Campaign estates with which it dealt. One of those was the Lansdowne estate, and attached to the Report of the Commission, in an Appendix, was a list of the tenants and a description of their holdings. What was the fact? The very first name that he found in the Schedule of the Appendix was that of a gentleman who occupied a seat in the House—the hon. Member for South Kerry. This gentleman it seemed, holding 868 acres upon that estate at a rent of £760, allowed himself to be evicted for non-payment of one year's rent. The Members of the House daily had an opportunity of seeing this hon. Member adorning the Benches below the Gangway, and there were few men but would have thought that he was a reasonable and sensible man. Was it that the hon. Member was not able to pay his rent? Nothing of the kind, because the hon. Member had, at a meeting of the Irish National League held in Dublin, and reported in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 30th of March, 1887, publicly said—

> "The Luggacurren evictions differed from all other evictions to this extent—that the tenants were able to pay their rent."

He said—

> "It was a fight of intelligence backed up by the leaders of their race."

He had been very much struck with the gentle tones of the hon. Member for East Mayo in the House to-night—so different from the impassioned rhetoric with which he was wont to address his co-patriots when he went on the rampage in Ireland. He (Mr. Dane) should like to know what the predecessors of the 1,500 tenants who would come under the definition of evicted tenants would say when they read their *Freeman's Journal* to-morrow and found that the only persons who under the Bill would get fixity of tenure would be the 1,500 so-called land-grabbers? These land-grabbers had only to object to being displaced and all proceedings in favour of the evicted tenants who were squatting on the roadside would be blocked. What would these people say when they remembered that the late First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) had declared to them that within one month of the Liberal Party coming into power they would be restored to their homesteads? If the Bill was to become law he (Mr. Dane) should like to know where was the security for the life of any one of these 1,500 tenants now in possession? When the Chief Secretary made his declaration someone on the Back Benches below the Gangway said, "That is a curious provision—they cannot touch these men"; and from behind came the solemn, dreadful words "We will boycott them." He happened to know that already the planters on the Massereene estate were most strictly boycotted, and if they were boycotted now would they be boycotted any less on the Bill becoming law? The Bill, in his opinion, was not an honest Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman and his Government honestly desired to relieve the unfortunate dupes of political agitators let them boldly bring forward a Bill to compensate them out of the Consolidated Fund, and then see what the British taxpayer would say. He objected to the Bill not only on the ground of principle, but because it sought to apply £100,000 of the Church surplus to do what? It was bad enough to plunder the Church, but it was worse than sacrilege to apply the plunder in rewarding men who had been guilty of dishonest conduct in every shape and form. The Bill would give a premium to dishonest tenants. The hon. Member for East Mayo had enlivened his speech with an anecdote about a land agent who went up to the North of Ireland to look for planters. This man said, "I met many men who had plenty of money but no pluck, and some men with plenty of pluck but no money." He (Mr. Dane) knew plenty of these so-called planters who were in possession of their farms. They were humble men, without perhaps much money, but they had always discharged their contracts honestly, and were by no means without pluck. Anyone who attempted to interfere with them would get as good as he gave. Many of the evicted tenants, on the other hand, were men who had never done an honest day's work in their lives. Were they to be preferred before the other class? Were the tenants who had always paid their rent, who had never had arrears wiped off, to have planted by their sides, with fixity of tenure, these social plague spots? If the right hon. Gentleman desired to be generous let him be so at the expense of the State, and not at that of honest men who had lived honest, prosperous lives, and had always met their contracts as they became due. Anything more ludicrous than the proposition of the Chief Secretary was never heard of. He proposed a Court of Arbitration manned by three arbitrators. They did not know who these arbitrators were to be. They did not know if the head was to be a limb of the law, or a farmer, or statistician. At all events, these tenants were to come off from the roadsides, and the Court of Arbitration was to sit upon them and settle what amount was to be paid, and then the tenants, who had been living from hand to mouth on charity doled out from the Land League offices in Dublin, were to find half the amount. Where were they to get it? Would the hon. Member for East Mayo, who appeared to him to have no means of livelihood himself—by which expression he meant——

Mr. SEXTON: I rise to Order. Is this reference to my hon. Friend within the common decencies of Debate?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. Gentleman will refrain from personalities of any kind, and that he will retract that expression.

Mr. DANE said, he would be sorry to use language that would hurt the feelings of any hon. Member. He used these words in the sense that the hon. Member had no profession, and that the only work he followed was to go round the country making political speeches. Hon. Gentlemen were very susceptible of having their feelings wounded. However, he would like to hear something practical from them as to who was to pay the half that these tenants were to be called upon to furnish. They were told that the houses on the farms would not be in good condition, and, with great generosity, the Chief Secretary was to give them £50 to put a house on the farm. Let them just picture the condition of these 1,500 evicted tenants passed back to the evicted farms without a sixpence except what they could get from hon. Members behind him, with £50 for a house, and nothing to stock or support the farm with! How long would these new tenants be in possession before they would be in arrears again? What would the tenants do when they got in there? Supposing their friends came forward and gave them half the money, and they got this £50 to put a house on the farm. How were they to pay the rent? He always liked to look at a thing reasonably and from a practical point of view. It seemed to him that nothing more ridiculous could have been propounded than the arguments of the Chief Secretary. If there was one thing more than another that he had always admired in the Chief Secretary it was the display he made of the courage of his convictions, and he congratulated him upon the courage he displayed in this matter. He gave him credit also for having strangled the Report of the Mathew Commission. Let them hope that the Commission he was about to construct would be constructed on practical principles, and that the three men he placed upon it would be sound, practical men. Let him put men on the Commission who would have the good sense to hold their tongues, and not go into Court determined to prejudge the case, thereby losing the confidence of all parties who had to go before them. He represented an agricultural constituency, and was returned there by farmers who had paid their rents honestly, and often with great difficulty, during all these bad times.

Mr. DILLON: Yes, of the tenant farmers who took advantage of the reductions brought about by the Plan of Campaign.

*Mr. DANE: No, men who took what they got under the law of the land, and who set an example to the rest of Ireland; and if their example had been followed we should not have been discussing an Evicted Tenants Bill tonight.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said, the learned Gentleman in discussing the qualifications of the arbitrators under the Bill seemed to think that silence should be their chief qualification. He was bound to say that the hon. Member's own speech was no proof that he possessed that qualification himself. He had listened to speeches in that House during the most acute phases of the Irish Question, and he must say that he never heard one so rude, so coarse, and so offensive as that which they had just heard. The learned Gentleman spoke of the hon. Member for East Mayo as a person without the means of subsistence—an absurd and absolute and manifest falsehood. They knew of men inside and outside that House who had professions and yet had not the means of subsistence. He could not imagine any Englishman who had not allowed his mind to be prejudiced by Party feeling listening to that speech from the advocate—a scion of the Irish landlord class — without conceiving what indignity that class is capable of casting upon the Irish people.

Mr. DANE: I did not speak as a scion or a representative of the landlord class.

Mr. SEXTON: He is one, at any rate.

Mr. DANE: I beg to say I am not.

Mr. SEXTON: I think he is a member of a family connected with the ownership of land in Ireland.

Mr. DANE: I am not.

Mr. SEXTON said, at all events, the hon. Member appeared as the advocate of the landlord class in Ireland, and his speech was steeped in Party spite. When one considered how deeply the future settlement of the country was concerned with this question, and how totally the hon. Member turned his back upon the great interests involved, he asked whether this House could desire any more conclusive proof that in dealing with Irish affairs it was not safe to follow the advice of those who appeared as advocates of the landlord class? Now, these tenants evicted from 1879, who were they? They were the men who by their spirit and courage and self-sacrifice put themselves in the forefront of the land agitation. It was true that some of them would have been able to pay their rents at the moment. But was it to be contended that because a tenant had some money he was to pay any rent that the landlord chose to demand? These were the men that had wrung seven great Land Acts out of Parliament. Did Parliament pass these Acts out of mere love and affection? Did they pass these Acts of their own volition? No, they had to be urged, and driven, and compelled. The Member for West Birmingham had said that if there had not been a Land League there would never have been a Land Bill. These men were the foremost movers for land reform. The quiet men in Ulster—the peaceable, honest men—went on in the old way, obeying the counsels of timidity. The first fruit of the action of the brave men on whose behalf this Bill was introduced to-night was the Act of 1881. Until that Act was passed every one of these quiet, peaceable, timid men, represented by the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Fermanagh, were subject to having their rent raised at the caprice of the landlord, and whether he paid his rent or not to be driven out of his home. What change did the Act of 1881 accomplish? It put these quiet tenants into a position of security. Then came the Arrears Act of 1882, by which, again, many of these quiet men were secured in their homes. Then came the Land Act of 1887. The Liberal Party were spoken of as though they were the only persons who had taken part in land legislation for Ireland. All that they did in 1881 was to say that the tenant might have a fair rent fixed, but in 1887 the Conservative Party declared that the judicial rent should be still further reduced, and that the final, most solemn and sacred kind of contract, a lease, should no longer avail against the fixing of a fair rent. That was not all the advantage that was got from the action of these brave men by the honest, quiet, peaceable men, who were content to look after their own interests while the agitation was going forward—the men represented in the House that night by the learned Member for North Fermanagh. He ventured to doubt whether any one of these tenants would authorise the hon. Member to come to that House and to deny to the men who had won for them these benefits the right and means to return to their homes. He affirmed that this Parliament was not in a position to refuse this act of justice to the men who asserted the claims of justice and obtained their rights. It was no reply to him to say that some of them could have paid their rent. He said that the rents were unjust. The abatements demanded by these men before eviction were abatements less than those freely granted by other landlords in the same district. These tenants were always willing to submit to arbitration. He should be astonished to hear any gentleman of the legal profession stand up in that House and say that tenants who in the midst of a violent movement were willing to submit to arbitration was not a proof that they were actuated by the spirit of justice. It was the Conservative Party who, by the Land Purchase Acts, submitted that the dual system of ownership in Ireland could not be expected to continue in Ireland, and certainly it was rather late in the day, after that great principle had been formulated by legislative enactment, to deny to the men who procured these reforms the right to return to their homes. He was not disposed upon this occasion to make a Second Reading speech. It was not easy to declare upon the Bill as a whole or upon its provisions while the Bill was not before them, and indeed he deprecated the system which had grown up of late of making a speech upon the introduction of a Bill which read as though Members had spoken with the Bill in their hands. He could only attribute the length and detail of some of the speeches they had heard to the desire of Members not so much to oppose this Bill as to oppose any and every Bill which the Government might bring in. But those speeches having been delivered something must be said by way of reply. Some gentlemen had said that the Bill was adverse and disagreeable to the landlords, and others said that if it passed it would do the tenants no real good. No one who really had the good of the evicted tenants at heart, and desired the peace and welfare of Ireland, would be discouraged by the circumstance that the Bill had been assailed from different points of view. They knew how difficult it was to get a Bill through both Houses of Parliament, but he did not think the prospect of passing this Bill into law was any the worse because it had been assailed from these different points of view. He could not but allude in the highest terms of praise to the admirable speech that had been delivered by the right hon. Member for Bodmin that evening. The right hon.

Gentleman was an Englishman and sat for an English constituency, and he was deeply impressed with the manly way in which he had approached the question. He felt sorry that the excellent example of "give and take" that had been set before hon. Members in that speech had not been observable also in the speech of the hon. Member for North Fermanagh. There were two main aspects in which the case must be specially viewed. The first was with regard to vacant farms, and the second was in relation to the farms that had been occupied since the evictions had been carried out. On those Irish estates which had acquired the name of the Campaign estates there were at the present no less than 1,350 farms which would be affected by the passing of this Bill, and already they understood such was the current and force of public opinion that of that number some 400 farms were again occupied mostly by their old tenants, which was a promising sign. There were now, therefore, some 900 vacant farms, and, in addition, 2,700 other tenants had also made application to the Commissioners, who, however, held that they had no means of judging whether the cases of these men could be fairly described as coming under the category of evicted tenants. He believed that in most cases landlords would be only too glad to allow the old tenants to return to their farms. It had been stated that if this Bill were passed the landlords would be more ready than before to admit the "land-grabber" as a tenant. That was, in his opinion, a most mistaken view to take of the effect of the Bill. He believed that if Irish landlords saw that this Bill had a chance of passing they would keep whatever number of farms they had on their hands vacant for six months rather than take an offer from any "land-grabber." In acting thus the Irish landlords would be acting directly in their own interests. They would have the opportunity of getting two years' rent paid them and the farm purchased at once if they wished to sell. Not only would every Irish landlord think twice before he threw away such a chance, but he believed the majority of them would fly at it. Nor were the advantages offered by the Bill only confined to the landlord. It offered advantages to the tenants also, and he gave it as his opinion that within one year of the passing of the Bill not a single farm would be vacant. On the next point—namely, with regard to the farms that had again been occupied—he believed that they were tenanted for the most part by persons who would be only too willing to give up their tenancy at any time. He was disposed to think that the provision of the Bill under which the planter would be entitled to receive compensation as the Commissioners might decree was one under which the great majority of planters, even those who were genuine agriculturists, would be willing to retire from the farms. The Bill was not ideally perfect, and was not such a measure as would be passed in an Irish Parliament. It was, however, as good a Bill as was likely to pass through the British Parliament, and he thought it would pass through the House of Lords. [Mr. MACARTNEY indicated dissent.] The hon. Member for South Antrim was not as good a type of British opinion as the right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney), who had indicated that when English public opinion became familiar with the provisions of the Bill even those who were not favourably disposed towards the tenant class in Ireland would regard the proposed settlement as equitable. In view of the prospect of the passage of the Bill into law, he (Mr. Sexton) was not disposed to be so critical as to its details as he might otherwise be, especially at this first stage, and he should without hesitation, and with much gratitude, vote for the introduction of the measure.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University) said, the hon. Member who had just addressed the House, although he had deprecated the making of Second Reading speeches upon the introduction of Bills, had made a Second Reading speech himself. He would not follow the hon. Member into his disquisition respecting land legislation during the past 15 years. It was not material to inquire whether the evicted tenants were, as the hon. Member said, self-sacrificing men who had brought about the land legislation of Ireland, for the simple reason that the Bill was not limited to tenants who were evicted prior to 1887, when the last of the Land Acts was passed, but was meant for the tenants evicted up to the time of the passage of the measure. If Members were to inquire into the merits or the demerits of the persons who were to have the advantage of the provisions of this Bill he thought a great deal might be said on the question whether the Imperial House of Commons should vote subsidies out of the public funds for the purpose of rewarding those who had admittedly taken part in a political campaign. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) was rather sanguine when he said he thought the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had not made a speech in opposition to the Bill. He (Mr. Carson) would remind the House that while his right hon. Friend criticised the Bill on almost every detail described by the Chief Secretary (Mr. J. Morley), he had not said that he could in any wise adopt a single one of its provisions. He (Mr. Carson) should be certainly sorry to adopt a *non possumus* attitude on this question. He knew enough of Ireland to say that he believed and admitted that the question of the evicted tenants, whether they were rightly or wrongly evicted, and whether they were evicted for the purpose of advancing a particular class of politics or not—that as long as it remained unsettled the question of the evicted tenants meant a great deal with reference to the peace of Ireland. He did not, however, wish it to be for a moment supposed that he thought the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) had proposed a satisfactory solution. When he saw the Bill he would give it his very best consideration, and in the meantime he wished to suggest certain matters which he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider before the Bill was printed. The question of the tribunal was all-important. If it could be avoided he thought Parliament ought not to be continually making new tribunals for the purpose of carrying out every Land Act that was passed. In the first place, Parliament created the Encumbered Estates Court, which was changed into the Landed Estates Court. In 1881 a new tribunal, the Land Commission, was set up. In 1885 more Commissioners were introduced for the purpose of carrying out the Purchase Act. At the present moment there were in Ireland five Land Commissioners—all now holding permanent offices and drawing salaries from the Consolidated Fund. The right hon. Gentleman now proposed to add practically another Land Court for a period of three years.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. and learned Gentleman, but I must do so in order to correct a slip of the tongue on my part. I am told by several friends that I did say three years. I meant to have said that the duration of the Commission would be two years.

Mr. CARSON said, that at all events if two Commissioners were appointed with good salaries in Ireland the very next move that would be made would be to make the offices permanent. He could not for the life of him see what was the advantage of having a temporary Commission of this kind. Why should not the new Commissioners be made a branch of the Land Commission? He thought the hon. Members below the Gangway would agree with what was said by the right hon. Member for Bodmin—namely, that above all things it would be necessary to appoint men who would be perfectly independent of all Parties in Ireland. What independence was going to be given to these authorities? The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) said he was going to have their salaries voted by Parliament. Did he think that the landlords and those who sympathised with them would consider that the arbitrators were in a perfectly independent position when their salaries depended upon the course which Members below the Gangway might take? To set up a tribunal of this kind would be to set up a tribunal which, if it did act independently, would certainly not get the credit of it from any Party in Ireland. As far as he had understood the right hon. Gentleman, he had not at all professed to define what were the actual lines on which the arbitrators were to act. This, he ventured to think, was an entire mistake. If the arbitrators were to be left to find out for themselves how they were to act in relation to the evicted tenants, or the landlords, or the new tenants, a condition of chaos would be created which would render the Act utterly nugatory. Were the arbitrators to inquire into the history of evictions, or into the history of the Plan of Campaign, and were they to inquire whether the tenants on leaving their holdings were free agents or not? He believed that many of them were not free agents, but went out because the law was not strong enough to protect them in Ireland.

If no definition was to be given to the arbitrators, different parties in Ireland would certainly raise the question, each from their own point of view, and there would never be a general consensus of opinion with each side doing its best to make the Act a success. The Leader of the Opposition had already suggested that there should be some method by which a valuation should be made. Was the State to advance money as upon the security in its present condition, or as upon the security of the farm in the condition in which it was when the tenant was evicted? A much more important question remained. How were the interests of the new tenants—the "planters" as they had been called—to be valued? The right hon. Gentleman had talked of some of the tenants having substantial interests, and some of them not having substantial interests. Everyone knew that every occupying tenant had a substantial interest in his holding. If it was to be laid down that the interests of the new tenants were to be compensated by the State, some definite lines on which those interests were to be valued should also be laid down. The hon. Member for Kerry had described the new tenants, or some of them, as being obnoxious persons who held untenable positions. He (Mr. Carson) wished to know whether they were to have the holdings valued on the assumption that they held untenable positions? If not, the only basis on which they could be valued was that of the fair market value. The matter, however, was not one on which an arbitrator could decide. It was a matter for the decision of the House, as it would lead to the question whether Parliament was prepared to withdraw its support from this particular class of tenants. He came now to the only other question he would venture to deal with on that occasion, and that was the question of finance. He could not see what was the object of the right hon. Gentleman in trying to lead the House to believe that the sum of £100,000 would be sufficient for his purpose. If the Bill were passed within 12 months the right hon. Gentleman, if he were still in power, or someone from the Conservative side if the Conservatives were then in power, would point out that the sum that had been given was absolutely useless, and would ask whether the Act was to become a dead letter simply for the want of £300,000 or £400,000 more. The question of finance must be gone into in great detail. It had been generally conceded throughout the Debate that there were at least 4,000 or 5,000 tenants who were to be restored to their holdings. If each of them received £50, how much of the £100,000 would there be left? The landlord had also to be paid a year's rent and his costs and the "planters" had also to be bought out. The right hon. Gentleman had not at all estimated what the number of these planters was likely to be, and he had passed over what was likely to be the most expensive item of all in connection with them. One of the Appendices of the Mathew Commission Report showed that on the Lansdowne estate alone 40 or 50 new tenants had purchased their holdings. It would be necessary to get rid of every one of these new tenants. Life would be intolerable for them in Ireland, and it would be utterly impossible for any one of them to remain on his holding, if it were thought that he was the only obstacle to the evicted tenant's return. Some of these men bought as far back as 1890, and had, therefore, found four or five years' instalments of the purchase money. It would be necessary for the State to take over the security upon which the Land Commission had advanced loans, and it would also be necessary to compensate these men for driving them out of a freehold for which they had found a large sum. There was one additional class of tenants on whom the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Morley) had not dealt at all—namely, those who had been put into their holdings as new tenants by the Land Purchase Act. At the present moment there were in the Land Judge's Court some 1,400 estates. Was it proposed that the lettings which had been made by the Chancery Division of the High Court were to be set aside? Did not the right hon. Gentleman see that he was bringing on a conflict of jurisdiction which would be of the most alarming character? The arbitrators would make a conditional Order that Mr. Justice Munro should turn out the tenants whom he accepted by a solemn Order of the Court some years previously, and the learned Judge would have to show cause why he could not go back on the Order made by him. He (Mr. Carson) had not much sympathy with leaving these 1,400 estates in Mr. Justice Munro's Court at all. He would suggest that those 1,400 estates should be left to Mr. Justice Munro to deal with in such a way as Parliament might choose. These tenants had got into possession under the sanction and by the order of the Court, and it would be a serious matter for the right hon. Gentleman to disturb them in their possession. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he had put forward these suggestions with the view of giving the Bill a full and fair consideration, because it was necessary that the right hon. Gentleman should be able to solve some of the very difficult problems that had been put before him, and which would have to be solved before it would be possible to pass the measure into law. The right hon. Gentleman would have to see whether there could not be some alternative arrived at besides turning out these men who were tenants under the existing law. He had always thought that it might be possible to solve the difficulty by applying the sum proposed to be advanced in the purchase of land on which to provide holdings for these evicted tenants. He was sure that in the present state of the Irish land market large tracts of land might be purchased for £100,000. He thought that that suggestion might be worth the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman. He had no doubt that the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman would give rise to many controversies in Ireland, because the tenant who had managed by borrowing money to pay his rent to tide over the bad time would protest against the evicted tenants being placed in a better position than that which he occupied. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to give the evicted tenants the advantage of compulsory purchase, which was not to be given to the existing tenant. With regard to the guarantee deposit, if it was to be abolished in the case of reinstated evicted tenants it ought to be abolished altogether. If the right hon. Gentleman could get over all the difficulties he had pointed out he could promise him his support in carrying this measure.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, that his right hon. Friend opposite had proposed to deal very cleverly with a very difficult task—a task which might have appalled even the most logical mind, and had attempted to reconcile difficulties which appeared to him to be absolutely irreconcilable. What was the principle which underlay this Bill? In the whole history of Parliament no such Bill had ever before been laid before the House of Commons, because it was altogether opposed to the principles of British jurisprudence, inasmuch as it proposed to replace in their holdings men who had not shown themselves to be loyal subjects or men whom a landlord would choose as his tenants of his own free will. Quite the reverse. Out of all the evicted tenants those were specially singled out who least deserved sympathy. The first question they should ask themselves was this—Why do you select a certain class of tenants to replace them in their farms? Why were not the sympathies of the Government enlisted earlier? The explanation was given in a speech made yesterday by the Home Secretary, who said that the Government depended for its existence on an Irish majority. The Bill had been framed to satisfy a section of the Irish supporters of the Government; but as far as he could gather it did not really satisfy anybody. It did not satisfy, so far as he could gather, the supporters of the hon. Member for Waterford. One Irish Member had condemned it in language as strong as he could use himself. The hon. Member for East Mayo supported the Bill, but said that it would not settle the question.

Mr. DILLON: I said it would not settle the Land Question.

Colonel SAUNDERSON said, the Land Question was the question. If it were not that the Irish politician required to have something with which to bribe his followers, the Irish Question would be settled to-morrow. They now learnt that if this Bill were carried it would be only a temporary settlement. In fact, so far as he could make out, it was a Bill devised by the Government to whitewash the Plan of Campaign and its authors. If the Bill were carried, as he supposed it would be—as any Bill would be which the Government clearly submitted as a matter of confidence, for however much hon. Members disapproved of it they would vote for it, and he therefore took it as a foregone conclusion that the Bill would pass through the House of Commons—what assurance was there that it would attain the objects of the Chief Secretary? The right hon. Gentleman believed it would settle a difficult question; but Irish Members said it would not. The supporters of the Member for Waterford, if he understood them rightly, absolutely rejected the Bill. The hon. Member for Mayo informed them that it would not settle the Land Question. Of course it would not settle the Land Question.

MR. DILLON: This is only a section of the Land Question.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said, the Chief Secretary had said that the dual ownership of land was one that could not and ought not to continue, and that it was an insupportable condition of affairs. That was a view that he had heard maintained by gentlemen on his own side of the House, who knew nothing whatever about the question. He supported the first Land Bill because he felt that Irish tenants required protection, but one of the great arguments for it was that the Ulster custom had brought about amicable relations, and that it ought to be extended to the rest of Ireland. This dual ownership, which they were told was so monstrous, had long existed in Ulster, which was not the least prosperous part of the country; and now it was said the system could be no longer maintained. If this Bill passed he supposed dual ownership would cease. As a landlord, he looked upon the Bill as a direct attack upon the land-owning class. But if it was only an attack upon the land-owning class, and if it might possibly effect a solution of the Irish Question, and bring peace and harmony to Ireland, though a landlord, he would make a great sacrifice to bring that about. But it was not proposed to do away with landlords; it was proposed to sweep away the present landlords and to create 500,000 in their place. Thus the Bill would not abolish the Irish agitator; it would leave him more landlords to attack, and they would be much more incapable of defending themselves than the present landlords. Members should ask themselves why it was necessary that they should depart from the ordinary lines of legislation in order to force tenants back to their

holdings. It was a sad sight to any man who cared for Ireland to see poor tenants living in huts in view of the farm which had been their home and that of their forefathers before them; but what effect ought that fact to have on the minds of the Irish people? It ought to point out to them that the men who advised them to adopt the course which had been their ruin were the men who all along had been at the bottom of Irish discontent and misfortune. The hon. Member for Mayo appeared to claim some credit for having been the means of feeding some 15,000 families. He did not give the hon. Member any credit, because the hon. Member was the author of their misery. He and his colleague the Member for Cork ran in couples, and openly avowed that their object was, as the hon. Member for East Mayo stated the other night at Wolverhampton, to make law in Ireland impossible.

MR. DILLON: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. What I said was that unfortunately since the Union we never could get any reform until the country was brought to the verge of civil war.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Then his object was to bring the country to the verge of civil war. That description of it satisfied him quite as well as his other statement. There was a difference in the course pursued by the hon. Members for Mayo and Cork, although they ran in couples. They put him in mind of the highwaymen of a former age, who went in couples. One was a ferocious highway robber who presented his pistol at the heads of travellers, and the other was the smiling gentleman who accepted the unwilling tribute from the passengers inside. The hon. Member for Mayo went about the country and openly proclaimed that if any man backed down in the fight his life would not be a happy one. The hon. Member for Cork had a more sympathetic method, and, following up the hon. Member for Mayo, made a collection in two carpet bags. This was what happened after the hon. Member for Mayo had made his speech. The hon. Member for Cork said—

> "There is nothing in all my life that has touched me more than the way in which those thousands of poor western farmers scraped together the amount of their deposits, many of them, to my own knowledge, by begging and by borrowing, and the absolute and unques-

tioning confidence with which they handed over their little store to a man like myself, a stranger to them, whose worldly goods were all contained in two portmanteaus."

If the House of Commons should think it was a wise thing to alter the whole character of their proceedings in order to satisfy the requirements of those two gentlemen, who happened to find themselves in a hole from which they could not extricate themselves, and if they were to tell the Irish landlords that instead of taking the solvent tenant they were to take those men who borrowed and begged their capital in order to place it in a portmanteau, they would be making a perfect mockery of themselves. If it could be shown that this would be a final solution of the Irish Question, hon. Members on his side of the House would earnestly consider it and try to make it acceptable. But there was no such pretence. From the Leaders of both sections below the Gangway they had had a clear statement that this would not be a real settlement at all—that it would be only a partial settlement. It was an effort to whitewash the Members for Mayo and Cork. One of the provisions of the Bill struck him as extremely ingenious. He always knew that the great difficulty that would present itself to the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was this—how to deal with, and satisfactorily get rid of, the tenants who were now in the possession of evicted farms. This Bill would afford what he would call a natural process of eviction. The final decision was given to the present tenants whether they would give up their farms or not, and should they say "No," what would be the position? He ventured to say that anybody who had studied Irish affairs during the last 10 or 11 years knew well that if a man now in possession of one of these evicted farms refused to give it up, the hon. Member for Mayo, or the hon. Member for Cork, or some of the other Irish patriots of the same kidney, would appear in the neighbourhood and would denounce the landgrabber by name, and then his life would not be a happy one in Ireland or beyond the sea. It was because he believed that this Bill would settle nothing, because he looked upon it as simply an effort to tide over an Irish political difficulty, which did not affect the Government themselves, but affected the Party upon which the Government depended for support; because he believed that this Bill, instead of being good for Ireland, would accentuate those disasters which had stained her past, that he should oppose this measure. He could conceive no lesson more hopelessly pernicious than to teach the Irish people that, having disobeyed the law and having stuck to their disobedience, the House of Commons would whitewash them. He would rather teach the Irish people that the law must be obeyed, and that then the House of Commons would be willing to deal justly, fairly, and generously with them. When the Irish people had been taught this lesson, great progress would have been made in the solution of the Irish Question.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said, he approached this question from a different standpoint to that in which the hon. and gallant Gentleman viewed it, because he believed as a Representative of a purely working-class community in Ireland he was bound to look at the question from the point of view of how it would affect his constituents. He must say that to a large extent he sympathised with many of the expressions that had fallen from the Chief Secretary, and he entirely shared his views that the advantages which would be conferred on the community were not confined to the particular class with whom the Bill more especially dealt. He was perfectly certain that the majority of his constituents would feel that if this question could be solved honourably on the basis suggested by the Chief Secretary it would be a pure gain. On the other hand, he could not but remember that there were principles involved in this solution which affected very closely the welfare not only of those immediately concerned but of any commercial community, and he was tempted to ask whether supposing the advantages that were claimed for this solution by the Chief Secretary were to be obtained there would not be compensating disadvantages in the way, and whether they could not obtain the same advantage without making the same sacrifice of principle they were asked to make by the Bill. This Debate had not turned upon the general principles which underlay this great change they were about to make, and he thought it was high time to recall some of the general principles which would be affected not only in Ireland but England if this Bill became law, and he felt strongly that if these general principles were once tampered with they would affect not only the particular section of the community for whose benefit the Bill was intended, but they would affect every community in Ireland, including his constituents. The main features of this Bill were cutting straight at the basis of all their political institutions. They were, in the first place, asked to sanction a great measure of *ex post facto* legislation. They were asked to state that these tenants who were not present tenants were to be considered present tenants, were to be put in a position which the law at present did not concede to them, and were to be restored to the position which, if they had obeyed the ordinary law, they would have been in long ago. He regarded it as a calamity to accept any principle of *ex post facto* legislation. They were asked to select for reward persons who had no other claim for reward or distinction than that they had been prominent as breakers of the law. They were conferring not only the immediate advantages in view, but other subsidiary advantages on these tenants in contradistinction to other tenants who had come under the benefit of the Land Act in Ireland, and there was no doubt they were putting the crown on the illegal action of hon. Members below the Gangway and confirming the opinion in Ireland that there was only one way to acquire the support of the Imperial Parliament and that was to break the law and continue to break it. He saw very clearly the misery and misfortune of the situation that had been created. He did not attach too much value to the appeal made by the hon. Member for East Mayo. He had heard the hon. Member on platforms and in that House, and he should never attach much value to his utterances in this House until he had the pleasure of observing a marked alteration in the character of the utterances the hon. Member gave vent to on platforms in Ireland, where they had more effect than they had in the House of Commons. He attached importance to the statement of the Chief Secretary that this question in its immediate aspects seriously concerned the peace of the country, but that did not convince him that this was the only solution. They had to face the sum of £100,000, which was to effect the solution of the case as the Chief Secretary put it. But there were two cases to be considered, the one which the Chief Secretary had in his mind and the case which the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin had in his mind. They were two totally different cases. The case pressed by the Chief Secretary was that of the hon. Member for East Mayo, who had a tin kettle tied to his tail and wanted to get rid of it. The hon. Member had got the Plan of Campaign tenants for whom he was responsible; they were preying on the community, and it was most desirable they should be taken away from the situation in which they at present stood. These were the men whom this Bill was to reinstate. If it were a case of £100,000 on the one side and of a great blow to their Constitution on the other, the game was not worth the candle, and there was a much more reasonable way in which this difficulty could be overcome. They had been told over and over again that the British public was dying to salve its conscience for the injury done to Ireland, and that it felt bitterly the wrong done to Ireland. If there was this grievous wrong or hardship in this case it would be a mere trifle to raise the £100,000, and solve the whole of the difficulty by, not out of public but out of private funds, making this bribe to the landlords on the one hand and the tenants on the other. There was no means of getting rid of the tenants except by some bribe acceptable to both landlords and tenants. It was a matter of merely £300 for everyone of the Gladstonian constituencies to collect, and it would be infinitely better if that was the whole problem that they should be relieved of it by means of private endeavour, and not leave their statute law and principles of legislation vitiated. It was said by the Leader of the Opposition with perfect truth that the sum proposed was, after all, a mere subsidy in aid of the Paris fund, and he should have great reluctance to vote in favour of a Bill which had no other object in view than that of subsidizing this Paris fund. Without going further, he said that a wholly different series of questions arose, and he should like to know a little more fully than the House had been told that night what was the view of the Chief Secretary with regard to tenants other than the Plan of Campaign tenants. For it must not be forgotten that there were two classes of tenants—the class who were mentioned in the Mathew Commission and those who were not—and he absolutely saw no reason why the whole of the tenants who had been evicted since 1879, wherever they were, should not be able to put in a claim for equal consideration if the wide interpretation of the Bill suggested by the hon. Member for the Harbour Division was accepted. If the Chief Secretary intended that the whole of the tenants should come in, then they should give this up as a hopeless problem at once. He should be glad to make some strong effort to bring about a solution of the difficulty, if the scheme was narrowed down so as to apply to the smaller number of tenants; but if they were going to have this wider proposal suggested to the House—and he saw absolutely nothing in the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman at the present moment which could or would exclude them—he declared it was simply a waste of time to propose this measure. He agreed with the Member for South Tyrone that to talk of £100,000 as in any way remotely resembling the cost of this operation, if it was to be conducted on the scale suggested by the Member for the Harbour Division, was absolutely and entirely a dream. He should be glad if the Chief Secretary could remove some of the objections which were *boná fide* objections he and others felt, not to the particular effort which was being made to remove this great sore in Ireland, but objections which applied, not only to this case, but to the mischievous effect it would have on all legislation in future. This was more than a question relating to 3,000 or 4,000 unhappy and misguided tenants in Ireland; it was a question which would affect all legislation, not only in regard to Ireland but the United Kingdom, and it was one in which the men who had to depend on the validity of contracts, and to conduct business on the faith of the laws under which they lived, were deeply concerned. It was rather too much to request hon. Members, on no stronger case than had been presented to them that night, to put their names to a Bill of this magnitude and character without any clear and definite explanation of what the limits of it were to be. They could not lightly embark on the operations of this kind, which involved the application of a great general principle to a particular instance, and which were opposed to those general principles of law that were the foundation of law and order in all countries. However he might sympathise with the object of the Bill, and he did sympathise with it to a large extent, he could not support it unless he was made infinitely better acquainted than at present with the solution which presented itself to the minds of the Government in regard to the great questions of principle involved. He desired, however, to reserve final judgment on the Bill until he had seen its details, but he felt bound to say that as it had been presented he did not think it guaranteed any solution of the difficulty.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) quite agreed that this was an occasion upon which it was not desirable to enter into any minute examination of the principles or details of this Bill. They had not the Bill before them in a form in which they could subject it to legitimate criticism. But he thought this was an occasion when those who, like himself, had taken considerable interest in times past in connection with land legislation for Ireland, should be permitted to say one or two words on the principle of the Bill. The hon. and gallant Member for Armagh referred to the fact that he, for one, had been a supporter of the Land Bill of 1870. He, like his hon. and gallant Friend, took some part, humble though it was, in connection with that Bill, though the part he took was exactly the reverse of that taken by the hon. and gallant Gentleman. He was one of a band of 11, all told, who recorded their votes against the Second Reading of that Bill. He was certainly the only Parliamentary, and, he believed, the only physical survivor of that band, which was divided into different political Parties, only two others belonging to his Party, and he was certainly the only physical survivor of these. The other companions who were with him in the Lobby on that occasion opposed the Bill, as the hon. Member for the Harbour Division had done that night, on grounds precisely the reverse of his. As regarded the principle of the Bill now before the House, they were told that they must and ought to make some sacrifice in order to settle the Irish Question. He had heard many appeals addressed to that House to make sacrifices to settle Irish questions. On the occasion he referred to, in 1870, they were told they were to make sacrifices of their convictions for the grand purpose of settling the Irish Question. He well remembered the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian making a pathetic appeal to the House to cast aside prejudices for the purpose of settling the Irish Question once and for all. They knew the result of that attempt, and how that Act of Parliament was one of the greatest injuries to Ireland and had landed them in the position they were now, when the Chief Secretary came down and asked them to make one more attempt to settle the Irish Question by casting once more to the winds the principles hitherto regarded as sacred by that House. What was the principle the right hon. Gentleman asked them to adopt? He asked them to lay their hands on public funds. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out they were Irish funds. He admitted they were Irish funds, abstracted from —he always used to say stolen from—but after the lapse of so many years he might, perhaps, use the somewhat negative expression, and say sums of money abstracted from one section of the Irish people, and it was understood at the time that they were to be appropriated with the subsequent sanction of Parliament to objects which were, generally speaking, beneficial to the Irish people at large. He did his best himself to remove as much of that fund as he could from the temptation of future occupants of the post of Chief Secretary, which he then held, and he succeeded in inducing Parliament to appropriate a considerable portion of the Irish Church Fund to what he believed to be beneficial uses. The provision of pensions for school teachers and the relief of distress were objects which were not only temporarily beneficial, but he thought that the school teachers fund was regarded as beneficial even at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to lay hands on that fund. And for what object? For the purpose of offering a premium on agitation, and of making it plain to the people of Ireland that the way to obtain a share of the public funds was to conduct themselves in a manner contrary to the ordinary law and take part in an illegal conspiracy and agitation. The Leader of the Opposition had very properly remarked that in the position he occupied he would reserve his criticism on this Bill, for the most part, until a later stage, and he deprecated the employment of any phraseology which would unduly add heat to our proceedings; therefore, he (Mr. Lowther) should very largely modify the expression of what he really felt himself with regard to this Bill. The Chief Secretary would realise that he was speaking very much in the mark when he said that the right hon. Gentleman was proposing to hand this money to persons who had proved themselves to be dishonest and law breakers, and who, in no way, were deserving of any share in public funds. Who were these people? They might be divided into two classes. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken exclusively of the Campaign tenants, although he had since been reminded that they were only the fringe of the large mass of evicted tenants in Ireland. The Campaign tenants were either bankrupt or dishonest —most of them both. Could the right hon. Gentleman say that these persons whom he was asking Parliament to place in the occupation of land had one solitary farthing of capital to employ on that land? The right hon. Gentleman knew that they were dishonest men, many of them who kept the money in their own pockets which belonged to other persons, and having declined to discharge their just debts the right hon. Gentleman now asked Parliament to depart from its traditions, and place these people as tenants once more in the farms they had justly forfeited. No doubt there were in Ireland some honest men who, through misfortune—probably owing to foreign competition—had, like farmers elsewhere, found farming unprofitable, but they were limited in number, and it was not for them that the Chief Secretary asked Parliament to depart from all its traditions. The right hon. Gentleman said it was to the interest of all Parties in the State and all persons in Ireland that this vexed question should be set at rest. What was this question. He had known many questions in the past which presented features of difficulty, but he never knew one more simple than the one before them that night. It was the simplest that ever came to his knowledge. Where were the features of difficulty? There was a certain category of persons who by their acts had put themselves in the position of being placed outside the holdings they formerly occupied, and in some cases their places were taken by others who more worthily filled them. There were in other cases farms held in hand by the owners, and in other cases, through terrorism which their friends exercised, farms remained derelict. But, at any rate, these persons possessed no claim according to law, and why should they disturb the *status quo*. He believed that if the evicted tenants were left in their present position they would afford a valuable warning to those who might be inclined to follow their example. The right hon. Gentleman thought that by passing the Bill he would get rid of the difficulty. But did he not think that in a few years hence those fortunate persons who had been rewarded for their dishonesty would find many imitators? The honest tenants had nothing given them; but the dishonest scoundrels had been rewarded: The honest men would, if the Bill were to become law, have few imitators, while the dishonest scoundrels would have afforded an object lesson that would be largely followed: He could not at all see the policy of taking a step of such an immoral character as that suggested by the right hon: Gentleman. The man who honestly paid his way was not offered back by the right hon: Gentleman the money he had paid, but the dishonest fraudulent debtor was handsomely awarded. He was sure that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were asked for a shilling out of the Revenue for such a purpose he would refuse it. But the right hon. Gentleman might feel certain that he would be called upon sooner or later. The miserable inadequacy of this £100,000, as an attempt to deal with so vast a question, must hereafter enforce an application on the holder of the public purse. By passing this Bill they would be placing a premium on agitation, and eventually create fresh difficulties in the government of Ireland; they would be calling into existence further agitators, and they would have spent this public money for no other purpose than to have discouraged industry and thrift in Ireland and offered a direct incentive to robbery and spoliation. He did not wish to use language which was at all adequate to the occasion, but he had always for many years said that those measures—he said it in opposing the Land Act of 1870, the Act of 1880, and in moving to discharge the Order for a Land Bill introduced, he was sorry to say, by one of his own political friends, the late Lord Mayo—that they were attempts to rob one class for the supposed benefit of another; and though he admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had offered in the Bill some inducements to the landowners of Ireland to entertain favourably some of its provisions, he felt bound, from the point of view of an English Member, with, unfortunately, some knowledge and recollection of Irish affairs, to enter his emphatic protest against Parliament being induced, even if it were proved to be a distinct advantage to the landlords of Ireland, to establish so mischievous a precedent as was embodied in this Bill. He refused to enter into the question as to how far previous Governments had lent themselves to mischievous precedents like this. Reference had been made to some section or other of some Act or other—he believed it was Section 13 of the Act of 1891—a more or less mischievous measure, and he was inclined to think more rather than less, which had been passed by the late Conservative Government. If a section of that Act established a bad precedent, so much the worse for the section of that Act; but he did not think they established the precedent which the Chief Secretary sought to draw from them. The Act of 1891 and Section 13 of that Act dealt entirely with the question of purchase; and the right hon. Gentleman could not fairly say that they afforded a just precedent for the proceedings he was asking the House that night to initiate. He would point out, in conclusion, that the whole treatment of this question of evicted tenants afforded a real object lesson to Parliament. Some slight reference had been made to a Commission which reflected great discredit on an eminent judicial authority who had left his judicial character behind him when he went for a short time into Ireland. He did not wish to dwell upon that Commission, and still less upon any personal aspect of the question; but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would realise that in assenting to the introduction of this Bill he and hon. Members who shared in his views were not precluded from offering the most strenuous opposition not only to details, but to the very groundwork and framework of the Bill. He hoped that the forecasts of Parliamentary sanction to the Bill—which had been indulged in by some of his hon. Friends—would not be realised; and he believed it would be found that the country was distinctly opposed to affording a legislative *imprimatur* of dishonesty to those who had refused to pay their just debts.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think everyone will agree that as much has been said on the introduction of this Bill as is required on such an occasion. The hostility which, almost alone of those who have spoken, the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down declared against the Bill is not altogether a bad omen. The right hon. Gentleman was also utterly opposed to the Acts of 1870 and 1881, and even of 1891. If the first two of those Acts had not been passed, Ireland would have been ungovernable; and the right hon. Gentleman's own administration was followed by the most tremendous outburst of agrarian crime known in modern times. The right hon. Gentleman also said that the Bill involved the smallest question that he had ever had to consider, whereas hon. Members from all quarters of the House who have spoken to-night have agreed that the question of the evicted tenants in Ireland is one of the utmost difficulty and danger. I think that on the whole I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the criticisms that have been passed upon the Bill, because no hon. Member had said, without qualification, that he was opposed either to the introduction or the Second Reading of the Bill. The most important contribution to the Debate to-night has been the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin. My right hon. Friend has most seriously impressed upon all parties the necessity for arriving at some reasonable settlement of this question, and of approaching the consideration of the question in a reasonable frame of mind. My right hon. Friend said—and I call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman opposite to it—that if you refuse the proposals which are made in this Bill, or at least if you approach those proposals in what I will call a *non possumus* spirit, you may depend upon it you are leaving for yourselves—when your time comes, sooner or later, to undertake the government of Ireland—a worse situation than that in which we are now placed. Only one speaker, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Harbour Division, has challenged the Bill head and front. I deeply regret that. I think that when the hon. Member for Dublin Harbour comes to take counsel with his friends he will become somewhat less hostile to the Bill than he has shown himself to be to-night.

Mr. HARRINGTON: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I did not attack the Bill so far as it goes. I said that its provisions with regard to the reinstatement of the tenants whose farms are now vacant is satisfactory, but I said that the Bill did not go far enough; that it only touched the fringe of the question, and that by no means would it establish peace in Ireland.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am glad to find that I misunderstood the hon. Gentleman in the matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition expressed his surprise to find that the Irish Church Fund could still yield the sum of £100,000, that he had been told in 1891 that the Fund was mortgaged up to the hilt, and he asked whether circumstances had arisen since 1891 to replenish the Fund which was then supposed to be exhausted. I do not know what representations were made to the right hon. Gentleman, and I can only assure him that the Treasury have told me that there there will be no difficulty in raising this £100,000. I will lay on the Table a Treasury statement as to how the Fund now stands. It has been suggested that I should lay down in the Bill the lines upon which the tribunal should proceed in fixing a fair rent or a fair price for the land, but I think it would be extremely difficult to do so. The same objection might have been raised by the Land Act of 1881. You cannot lay down a set of fixed principles by which fair rents or fair purchase may be interpreted. There are a number of considerations which cannot be set out in an Act, and which practical experienced men who are appointed to deal with the matter will think out for themselves as they go along. I have been asked to consider how the Bill will affect new tenants who were put in by the Land Judge. That is certainly a point worth consideration, but I think that when the hon. and learned Member who raised it sees the Bill he will find that it has not been overlooked. The hon. Member for Belfast said that his great objection to the Bill was that it was *ex post facto* legislation, but surely legislation cannot be said to be *ex post facto* simply because it is inspired by experience and guided by circumstances which are already in existence. Complaint has been made that I have not stated fully enough the facts and figures upon which we felt ourselves bound to introduce the Bill and the difficulties the Bill is designed to meet. I may say, in regard to that complaint, that I gave the House as long a statement as I thought it would appreciate; but I hope, however, that on the Second Reading I shall be able to make good any deficiency in that respect.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and the Solicitor General.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 176.]

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.—(No. 125.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside), who was indistinctly heard in the Gallery, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said, that in introducing the Bill he had laid down the lines on which it proceeded in order to facilitate the settlement of trade disputes. It enabled the Board of Trade, where a difference existed between an employer, or any class of employers and workmen, or between different classes of workmen, to exercise all or any of the following powers:—first, to inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference, and make such Report, if any, thereon as the Board might deem expedient; and, secondly, to invite the parties to the difference to meet together, by themselves or their representatives, under the presidency of a Chairman mutually agreed upon, or nominated by the Board of Trade or by some other person or body, with a view to the amicable settlement of the difference. He maintained that the best method to obtain a settlement was to bring an equal number of each party to the difference to sit down together at a table there, upon the footing of equality, to discuss the differences between them. He knew complaint had been made that the Bill did not go far enough, because it did not give compulsory powers and because it provided no means of enforcing any settlement that might be arrived at; but all those who had been engaged in this good work for the last 30 years, without a single exception, deprecated any attempt to introduce the element of compulsion into these voluntary Boards. Conciliation had in the past accomplished marvellous results. He would have liked, if he had time, to give to the House some evidence from a remarkable document he had before him—namely, an account of a conference which took place in the City of Durham, under the presidency of the Bishop of Durham, in trade disputes, showing the testimony brought forward by the most experienced men in the North of England who had taken the lead in bringing trade disputes to an amicable settlement. Mr. Robert Knight, the secretary of the wealthiest and most prosperous Trade Union in the Kingdom, the Boilermakers' and Shipbuilders' Society, appeared before the Royal Commission and gave admirable evidence on the working of conciliation in his own industry. He was asked several questions on the point, and he said there had been no general strike in the trade for 20 years. The very best feeling existed in the trade where before there was irritation and resentment between the masters and the workmen. He said that the effect upon the funds of the Society of this absence of strikes was, that whereas formerly the expenditure of the funds had been enormous owing to strikes, within the last two years the whole cost in that respect had fallen to 1½ per cent. of the Society's income. But there were other leaders besides Trades Unions leaders who gave evidence of the good which had been done by conciliation.

Mr. David Dale, a man who had done more than anyone else to reconcile capital and labour in this country, and whose excellent work at the Conference in Berlin had borne good work in Germany, had expressed himself as strongly opposed to compulsion. This gentleman had, furthermore, declared himself in favour of the present measure, believing that it would be followed by satisfactory results. Mr. Whitwell, Chairman of the Iron Trade Association, and many other authorities, had supported this view. He himself had had 35 years' experience in dealing with these subjects. He had sat on a Board of Conciliation for 13 years, and never in a single instance had they attempted compulsion. It had never been required, for it was found that employers would give way to a much greater extent under voluntary arrangements than they would under dictation or compulsion. It was said, "But you introduced a Bill to enforce arbitration in 1872, and placed it on the Statute Book." Well, the London Trades Council thought there should be some means of enforcing an award, and they asked Mr. Justice Wright to draw up a Bill for them, providing that where the two parties agreed the award should be enforced. They asked him (Mr. Mundella) to introduce the measure, and he had replied, "It can do no harm, and it may do some good. I have not much faith in it, but I am willing to try it." The other Member who put his name on the back of it was Mr. W. H. Smith. In 1871 or 1872 they carried this Bill; but what had been the result? There had never been a single case put under it. Both masters and workmen shrank from anything that savoured of a Court of Law. They objected to go where they had to swear oaths, produce books, and do things under compulsion. Therefore, the House might to-morrow repeal all the Acts relating to compulsory arbitration, for they had never been acted on. The conciliation clause introduced into the Railway Bill of 1888 did more in one year to lessen disputes arising than the right to appeal to any tribunal, however powerfully constituted and expensive, would ever have done. The widest questions had been dealt with under it—questions affecting whole groups or classes of goods and affecting whole trades, and it had been a very gratifying thing for a Government Department to receive letters of thanks from traders and Railway Companies for their very good offices they had used and the satisfactory results that had been attained. They might be told, "You could have done that without the Statute Book—the Railway Company would have listened to you." But the Board of Trade would have had no *locus standi* and no opportunity of making Reports to the House, and those Reports were very important in their bearing upon public opinion. The proposed Conciliation Board must have a legal standing in order that its powers might be clearly defined. He greatly regretted that the Report of the Royal Labour Commission was not before the House. He had watched the proceedings of that Commission with the deepest interest, and he knew what would be the result of the investigation. He was sure it would give force and effect to the Bill. In conclusion, he pointed out that the subject was a national and not a Party question. No Party capital could possibly be got out of it, and he hoped, therefore, that the House would take a wide and broad view of the measures it was proposed to introduce. He hoped that the House would consent to the Second Reading, and send the Bill to a Grand Committee for full discussion, in conjunction with the Bill that had been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the London University (Sir J. Lubbock) on the same subject.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

The Marquess of CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, there was one statement of the right hon. Gentleman with which he agreed. He joined in the regret of the right hon. Gentleman that the Report of the Labour Commission had not been made before the Second Reading of the Bill had come on for discussion. He would remind the House of the action of the President of the Board of Trade only a few days ago, when the Second Reading of the Poor Law Relief Bill was postponed owing to the action of the Government because there was a Committee sitting to inquire into that very question. One of the most important questions considered by the Labour Commission was the question of arbitration in labour disputes, and this Bill was now being brought forward without that Commission having reported. He contended that the Bill was practically useless, because it did not contain any compulsory powers, and that, therefore, nothing could be done under it which could not be as well done without it. He should be the last person to advocate compulsory powers of any sort or kind, but he argued that this Bill contained nothing which could not be done without its provisions, and that without compulsion it would be of no use whatever. The Bill would be of no use to miners in the North of England, because in Durham and some other of the Northern Counties the men and the coalowners worked well together, and if disputes arose they were settled by the representatives of each side, and had no need, therefore, to apply to any Conciliation Board. He did not wish to see compulsory powers placed in the Bill, but at the same time he was convinced that the measure would be no use without them.

*Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, his noble Friend entirely misinterpreted the principles on which the Bill was founded. He dissented from the view that compulsory power was required. How could they have compulsory power to make one man receive a wage which he was not inclined to take and another man to pay what he did not feel inclined to pay, unless the arbitration was voluntary. The coal strike in Durham had lasted for more than three months, and had brought ruin to many hundreds of persons in no way connected with the coal industries, and how was that strike at last brought to an end? It was brought to an end by the Bishop of Durham, who asked both parties to meet him, and under whose influence arrangements were made which put an end to the trouble. That was all done voluntarily. What did the Bill do? All that it would do was to prevent a strike from going on for any length of time without offering a tribunal to the men or the employers affected; and the compulsory force behind it was, after all, public opinion. If the employers declined the arbitration of the Board of Trade, or if the workmen declined it, public opinion would be against those who declined conciliation. The public would say, "They have a bad case, and dare not go before a tribunal. He would give the House his own experience as an arbitrator in the wrought-iron trade. Some years ago he gave an award for an advance which was not thought by the men to be sufficient, and the men struck against the award. They were on strike about 14 days; but they returned to work at last because the public opinion of the district was against them for striking against an award. At the end of three months, when the award expired, the men proposed him as arbitrator to the employers on a further point of difference. These were the sort of cases one met with in every-day life. If compulsion had been tried in that case it would have failed. He was not fond of placing new powers in the hands of the Board of Trade or of any Government Department, but all the Bill did was to allow the Board of Trade to suggest an arbitration and do their best to effect conciliation.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he was obliged to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade for promising to allow his Bill to go to the Committee together with the Government measure. It showed that the right hon. Gentleman was anxious to give the principle of both measures an opportunity of being discussed. They all recognised the services the right hon. Gentleman had rendered to the principle of conciliation, and agreed that every opinion coming from him was of great value; but while he (Sir J. Lubbock) entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman as to the importance of the subject, he was afraid he could not share with him his view as to the usefulness of the present Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said it should not go too far; but he (Sir J. Lubbock) ventured to think that it did not go anywhere at all. At the present moment the Board of Trade, if it liked, could inquire into trade differences; it could invite the parties to a conference, and it could appoint a Board of Conciliation. These were the only points in the Bill, but they gave no new powers so far as the Board of Trade was concerned. The provision as to the appointment of arbitrators was unnecessary for the same reason, as also was that in regard to sending down into the country to make inquiries as to differences existing between employers and employed.

MR. MUNDELLA: We can do it now, but we have no *locus standi*.

SIR J. LUBBOCK said, the right hon. Gentleman admitted they could do it now. The Bill further gave power to the Board of Trade to present annually a Report on this subject to Parliament. That, also, they could do without an Act. He failed, therefore, to see that the Bill, if carried, could have any good effect. Rightly or wrongly, his (Sir J. Lubbock's) own Bill, however, did go a great deal further, and it had the unanimous support of the Chambers of Commerce and of the leading London Trades Unionists. That Bill was not introduced on behalf of the employers, but was equally supported by the employed. Though the Bill before the House was not likely to effect much, that was no reason why it should not be read a second time and sent to a Select Committee. He should therefore support the Motion for the Second Reading.

MR. PIERPOINT (Warrington) said, in introducing the Motion the right hon. Gentlemen had said that his explanation of it would be brief and inadequate. He (Mr. Pierpoint) agreed with the right hon. Gentleman in that statement. The speech he had delivered had been all briefness, and no explanation of the Bill. And as for the Bill, it was all Bill without any conciliation. Every one of its provisions had been practically provided for by what had been done already. The right hon. Gentleman devoted himself entirely to explaining what was not in the Bill, and did not give a single second to what was in it, for the simple reason that he recognised that it contained nothing.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

EDUCATION CODE, 1894.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) said, that on Tuesday night a wish was universally expressed that there should be a postponement until the evening of the discussion on two points of difficulty which had arisen in connection with the Code, and he proposed now shortly to trouble the House with a few reasons why in respect of those matters he thought it desirable the House should pray Her Majesty to withhold her assent. Article 73, as originally presented by the Vice President, was very objectionable. It limited altogether the free action of the school, and would inevitably have created a necessity for extra teachers, thereby throwing additional expense on the school. But in consequence of the pressure put upon the right hon. Gentleman by the Opposition the Article had been modified and improved, though it was still far from satisfactory. The amended Article introduced a new phrase in the very remarkable English the Department always used, and it limited the school in respect of the number of children which each teacher might teach. The words used were, "The number of children habitually present at one time." He frankly confessed he found great difficulty in determining the exact meaning of those words. This phrase was most ambiguous, and the unreasonable demands of the Department had always been founded on some ambiguous phrase in either the Code or in an Act of Parliament. There would be constant dispute and misunderstanding as to what the words "habitually present" really meant, and it would lead to much correspondence and great irritation, which he was sure the right hon. Gentleman himself would be the first to desire to avoid. That was not the only objection. The Article fixed the capacity of teachers per class instead of per school. The head teacher of a school might be qualified to deal not merely with 60 or 70 pupils, but with 100, while another and less skilful teacher might not be qualified to deal with the maximum number of children set down in the Article. A far better arrangement would be for the skilful man to be allowed to deal with 100 children, whilst the less skilful one might perhaps have no more than 40 or 50 pupils. These were matters which ought to be left to the managers of a school to arrange; but if the Article proposed by the right hon. Gentleman passed in its present form no such arrangements could be made, and there would be an end of all elasticity. The last point he had to touch upon was the manner in which the position of the teachers was dealt with. The Article might be interpreted to mean that the head teacher was not to be counted among the staff of the school for certain purposes. In large schools the probability was that the Head Master would be excluded from the computation when the question for how many children the staff of a school was adequate came up for consideration. A class might be under his control, but it would not necessarily be under his instruction, although he might be instructing it a small part of the time. For these reasons that paragraph of the Article seemed entirely unsatisfactory. The last paragraph of the Article would certainly make it necessary to increase the staff of the school, and would thus impose an additional burden upon localities where the school rate was already abnormally high. He would like the right hon. Gentleman to explain why he considered it necessary thus to increase the staffs. The expense which elementary education in this country had already reached should make the House pause before any further expense was thrown on the ratepayers. He was perfectly certain that neither the late Mr. Forster nor Lord Sandon had the least conception of the height to which elementary education would run. In Board school districts it was now well over £2 per scholar, and even in voluntary schools, which were far more economically managed, it nearly approached £2. Before the right hon. Gentleman threw extra expense on the unfortunate country schools, which he was harassing every day in the week, he should give some reason for doing so. Now he came to Article 90, which provided what was known as the 17s. 6d. limit. The Article was founded on Section 19 of the Act of 1876, and it provided that the grant should not exceed the amount per child, except by the sum by which the income of the school derived from voluntary subscriptions and receipts from other sources outside the Parliamentary grant exceeded such amount. In other words, the Act of Parliament provided that the Parliamentary grant should not exceed the 17s. 6d. limit unless the income from other sources was equal in amount to the grant. The words of the Act were very wide in regard to the meaning of "income," and in the 20th section of the Act of 1876, which was referred to in Article 9, it was indicated that income which should be allowed to count for grant must be applied for the purposes of public elementary schools. That seemed to be a perfectly plain proposition. The Code sought unjustly to reduce the incomes of schools by excluding expenditure on building from consideration in the limitation of the grant. In this respect he believed the Code was illegal, and contravened the Act; certainly it was contrary to the spirit of the Act. The Code was irrational and illogical in that it made a distinction between repairs and the erection of buildings, between rent and capital expenditure. This was one of many examples in which the Code sought to evade the objects of the Act of Parliament, and he doubted very much if the Article in that respect was legal. At any rate, it was a provision which the House ought not to accept, and he hoped they would disagree with it and allow the managers to include in their account statements of expenditure on repairs and buildings. The Department was a regular bully. It always attacked people who they thought would not resist. There was the case of the Highbury Vale school as to which a question was put in the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dartford. "My Lords" had refused to have anything to do with the grant before the question was put, but when the right hon. Gentleman intervened they promptly yielded. Had it been a poor country school it would probably have fared differently. Exactly the same thing occurred in another case, and it was quite obvious that the ground on which the Department had proceeded was illogical and illegal. He knew that very often, through the intervention of Members of that House, these wrongs were set right, but the great delay that took place in the payment of grants was a very serious thing for the schools. A good deal of correspondence had to take place between the Department and the school managers, which usually resulted in the delay of the payment for some months. Both on the ground of the Act of Parliament itself, and on the general ground of convenience, he thought the time had come when the Article ought to be altered, and he therefore moved the omission of these words. Again and again, during the Debates which took place when the 17s. 6d. limit was established, it was stated that the desire on all hands was to stimulate voluntary subscriptions, and it was said over and over again that it was absolutely necessary for the purposes of education that the schools themselves, and all the apparatus for education, should be as efficient as possible. There was nothing more important than the erection of good schools, and if subscriptions were stimulated on that account good work was done. For all these reasons, he submitted that the time had come when these words ought to be omitted. He pressed upon the Minister for Education the enormous importance of not allowing the Code to violate the Act of Parliament.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to withhold Her assent to the words in page 17, article 90, of the Education Code of 1894, viz., 'any outlay on the premises beyond the cost of ordinary repairs or,' and to all the words of the Minute of the 17th April 1894 from 'in order that,' to the end."—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) said, the noble Lord, who undoubtedly knew a great deal about educational matters, had ended his speech with some moderation as regarded the Education Department itself, although he (Mr. Acland) knew that he regarded him personally with grave suspicion. He did not wish to speak of him so severely as the Prime Minister spoke of a noble Lord who had gone down to his (Mr. Acland's) father's estate, to bring against him a charge of treating leniently the schools on his father's estate. He did not say that the noble Lord had got so far as that yet. But he had used words which he could not pass over. He said just now that the Department was a regular bully. He (Mr. Acland) had said before that he wished the noble Lord could take his place. If he did so, he would undoubtedly resent in the strongest terms language of that sort being used against his Department. The Education Department was not a regular bully. It did not always attack those who could not resist. The heads of the Education Department, the secretaries, the assistant secretaries, and the examiners, many of them appointed by patronage under Conservative Governments, were high-minded men, who did their duty properly and thoroughly, and they were neither bullies nor were they persons who tried to trample upon those who could not resist. They were engaged in important works, and they were not, he repeated, bullies, as the noble Lord suggested. Now, the noble Lord proposed to omit certain words from Section 90, to the effect that any outlay on premises beyond the cost of ordinary repairs was not to be included in the school accounts for the purpose of what was called the 17s. 6d. limit. The noble Lord held high language upon this subject. He might remind him that the words had been in the Code for the last 21 years, and they had been in the Code with the permission and sanction of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Sandon, Lord Knutsford, Lord Cranbrook and the late Vice President of the Department. If the words were so objectionable he should have thought that they would have been objected to long ago. The fact was that they were based upon an Act of Parliament which the noble Lord appeared to have overlooked. The words appeared in Section 96 of the Act of 1870, and provided that no Parliamentary grant should be made in respect of buildings, enlarging, improving or fitting up of an elementary school except in those cases where applications were sent in before the 31st of December 1870. It was in accordance with that section, and because any money granted for buildings other than in repairs under the 17s. 6d. limit would be a direct infringement of that section, that these words were incorporated in the Code; and if these words were not in the Code the Act of Parliament would have the same effect. Lord Sandon held that no part of the annual grant now paid might be appropriated under this section of the Act to enlarging, improving, or fitting up of schools, and that all annual grants must be devoted to annual maintenance, and, so far as school buildings were concerned, included charges for ordinary repairs to premises and furniture, and nothing else. When the late Lord Sandon wrote that, was it to be supposed that he did not know what he was talking about? [Viscount CRANBORNE: No.] Well, apparently not. If the noble Lord looked at that section of the Act, and at the Code, and compared the two, and remembered also that the former President of the Council, whom he had mentioned, had not attempted to strike out the words—and that even if they were struck out they would hold just the same by virtue of the Act of Parliament—he would see that Parliament could not make a grant in aid of buildings.

Viscount CRANBORNE said, what he suggested was that the grant which was actually earned by a school ought not to be cut off because some other money was voted to the school.

Mr. ACLAND said, what the noble Lord wanted was that money raised for building purposes should be included as income, and the grant from Parliament given, if the 17s. 6d. limited was exceeded, to meet that income, which included money for building. [Viscount Cranborne: It is earned.] That would be giving a grant for building purposes, and that had been held to be wrong by all the distinguished persons he had mentioned. If he was wrong he was wrong in very good company. As to the other point with regard to the proportion of scholars and teachers, he would first of all point out that a large number of persons interested in voluntary schools were very well satisfied with the words to which objection was now taken. The words did not affect the grant at all. They were mere directory words. Therefore, so far as he was concerned, knowing perfectly well that there was general satisfaction with these words, he saw no reason to alter them. Nor did he believe that the teachers desired to have them in the form of the Amendment moved by the noble Lord. As to the time given for the reduction of the proportions of scholars to teachers from 60 to 50, from 70 to 60, and from 50 to 45, he could only say that two years' notice appeared to the Department to be a reasonable one. They desired to give fair notice of any change. He did not know whether the noble Lord thought that a teacher could teach 100 scholars, but whether he thought so or whether he did not, it was certain that there were hundreds of teachers and Inspectors who did not think a teacher capable of teaching 100 scholars. If the noble Lord thought that the Minute was aimed at voluntary schools he was very much mistaken. All that was intended was in two years time a Regulation of a very moderate kind should come into force, reducing the number of scholars for the relief of the teachers and the benefit of the children themselves. There was nothing in the words that the noble Lord wanted to omit that would affect the grant at all.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, this was the last occasion they would have of speaking upon this subject, and he hoped the House would courteously allow him two or three minutes for the remarks he wished to make. He must say that the interpretation which the right hon. Gentleman put upon this section of the Code was considered a very great hardship by the voluntary schools. They complained that the money they themselves raised for these purposes was cut off by the Department. The answer which had been given by the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Education to the noble Lord had caused him great pain and disappointment. With regard to the proportion of scholars and teachers, he did not know who were the voluntary school authorities who had indicated to the right hon. Gentleman that they were satisfied with the modifications made by the Code. He ventured to say that if the National Society could be called an authority, that that Society would not be satisfied by any means. When he ventured on Tuesday night to bring this subject before the House, his right hon. Friend complained of his action because he was about to present a Minute upon the subject. He had now got that Minute in his hand. No doubt the Minute was to some extent an improvement for which they must be grateful. Still, it contained these words to which they objected—that the numbers would be reduced from 60 to 50, from 70 to 60, and from 50 to 45. These words, he ventured to warn the Minister, would be made a grievance against the voluntary schools, and be made the ground of an agitation for an increase of the staff of teachers. This provision would entail a most grievous charge upon voluntary schools, and once more in the great interest of voluntary schools throughout England he made his protest against the retention of the words.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 26; Noes 122.—(Division List, No. 29.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.—(No. 122.)

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 3) BILL. (No. 115.)

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—

Army (Annual) Bill, without Amendment.

LAW LIBRARY, FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 131.)

As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 134.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL. (No. 112.)

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

EAST LONDON WATER BILL.

Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee on the East London Water Bill, in Session 1886, and the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, in Session 1891, be referred to the Committee on the East London Water Bill.—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

DOGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Herbert Gardner, Bill to consolidate and amend certain enactments relating to Dogs, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Herbert Gardner, Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Solicitor General, and The Lord Advocate.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 177.]

JUSTICES (FEES).

Return presented, — relative thereto [Address 14th December, 1893; *Mr. A. C. Morton*]; to lie upon the Table.

ALIENS.

Return presented, — relative thereto [Address 12th April; *Mr. H. L. W. Lawson*]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 81.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND.)

Copy presented,—of Statement showing (1) the expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland in the year 1893 upon Annual Grants to Elementary Schools; and (2) the actual number of Elementary Schools on the Annual Grant List, &c., and the Results of the Inspection and Examination of Elementary Schools during the year ended 30th September, 1893 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND) PENSION FUND.

Copy presented,—of Annual Account of Receipts and Payments for the year 1893, &c. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 10th April, 1894, declaring that James Marsh (Artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory), War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN THE COUNTY OF LONDON (CONTRIBUTIONS IN LIEU OF LOCAL RATES).

Return ordered, "showing (1) the name of each Parish in which the Government occupies property; (2) the extent and character of such property; (3) the valuation put upon such property for local rating; (4) the amount of Contribution paid to each Parish in the last financial year; and (5) special Acts of Parliament (if any) applicable to the case."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (CIRCULAR LETTERS).

Return ordered, "of the several Circular Letters which have been issued by the Local Government Board to Local Authorities with reference to the provisions of 'The Local Government Act, 1894.'"—(*Mr. Heneage.*)

House adjourned at two minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 20th April 1894.

PISTOLS BILL.—(No. 11.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD **STANLEY OF ALDERLEY** said, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, he did not know whether this Bill ought to be described as Mr. Asquith's Bill or his own, or whether it belonged to both of them, nor whether he ought to apologise to Her Majesty's Government for taking up a Bill of theirs, or should claim salvage from them for saving a derelict. As the Government had brought in a Bill last Session, they could not say that it was unnecessary. The object the Government had in view was, as the full title expressed it, to regulate the sale and use of pistols; it was, therefore, in restriction of trade, and its object was, or ought to be, to check the too frequent sale of pistols, and to diminish the number of them, which had led to so many deaths and accidents. The figures of revolver casualties given by Lord Carmarthen on the 30th of March, were of inquests in 1890, 139; in 1891, 180; in 1892, 217; and of non-fatal cases the figures were—59, 72, and 95 respectively. The Bill brought in by Mr. Asquith did very little towards checking the sale of pistols; all it did was to prevent the sale of them without the payment of the 10s. Gun Tax. This tax would be insufficient to restrict the sale, and Clause 3 of the Home Office Bill provided that those who sold pistols might also sell licences, so that an intending suicide or criminal was deprived of the time for reflection which he would have if these two transactions were not carried on under the same roof. The effect of this Bill would rather be to increase the Revenue than to diminish accidents and crimes. There was a good provision in the Home Office Bill, which was that of allowing pawnbrokers to sell pistols, since this would promote the pawning of pistols, and thus bringing them gradually into the Registers. He would now mention the points in which this Bill differed from that of the Home Office Bill. In the first place, Mr. Asquith's Bill took no notice of toy pistols; a large quantity of accidents had been due to these, as was natural, since they were toys and in the hands of schoolboys. He had two of these toy pistols which had been lent to him by Mr. Ernest W. Lewis, Surgeon at the West London Hospital, who had had three pistol cases between October and March last. [The noble Lord produced the weapons.] The smaller pistol had, in the hands of Pullen, a railway porter, caused the death of Pollard, another railway porter, through accident. Both these railway porters were between the age of 19 and 20, and were qualified by Mr. Asquith's Bill to possess these dangerous weapons. The second and larger pistol belonged to a boy of 12, who fired it at his brother, a boy of 10, thinking it was not loaded; it had been loaded by the younger brother. The bullet went into his head, near the temple, and for three weeks the boy was unconscious. At last he was trephined and trepanned, and a piece of his skull removed, of the size of a penny, and now he had recovered his speech and was fairly well, though exposed to constant danger from the slightest blow on the head. The boy was at that moment present in the House, in the Yeoman Usher's box. What would secure most sympathy from Her Majesty's Government was the fact that this boy might not study for a year, and could never be sent to school where the risk of injury to his ill-defended brain would be too great. The elder brother also had to leave school, as the other boys greeted him with cries of Cain, where is Abel? If any one hesitated at restricting the liberty of adult subjects, there could be no ground for hesitation in the case of boys *in statu pupillari* and under school age; and he had inserted a new clause to make such toy pistols illegal and liable to seizure and forfeiture. The next difference between the two Bills was that this Bill proposed that no person should be able to purchase a pistol except he had taken out a full game licence of £3, or had obtained an authorisation from the Chief Police Inspector of his district to purchase a pistol and pay the 10s. duty. The Inspector, or Chief Officer of Police, would not grant his authorisation to persons of doubtful character, or who had no valid reason for using and carrying a pistol. It might be necessary or desirable to give a right of appeal from the Police Officer to the nearest Stipendiary Magistrate, which ought to be final. The next difference between the two Bills was that the Home Office Bill allowed boys and girls to purchase pistols as soon as they reached the age of 18. The Bill before the House put the age at 21, for from 17 to 19 was the age at which boys were as inclined to mischief as at a much earlier age. An additional sub-section in the present Bill limited the purchase of pistols to single women, ratepayers, who had a claim to them for protection with the authorisation of the Chief Officer of Police. Most people thought that women were more likely to injure themselves than the burglars, but in general women only wanted pistols to shoot a man who had deserted them, and a Police Inspector would readily recognise any such motive in an applicant for leave to purchase a pistol. The remaining alteration he had made in the Home Office Bill was in Clause 6 (7 of the present Bill), Sub-section 1, which allowed persons who had been sentenced for crimes of violence to penal servitude to carry or use a pistol five years after their release; this had been altered to perpetual deprivation of the right to carry a pistol. Sub-section 2 allowed ticket-of-leave holders, or persons under police supervision, to use pistols after they ceased to be subject to police supervision. Those persons were mostly forgers, or had committed crimes not of a violent description, and were not therefore so dangerous a class. Clause 8 provided that the Act should not apply to—(1) The sale of pistols by wholesale dealers for exportation, or in the ordinary course of wholesale dealing; nor (2) The sale of any antique pistol as a curiosity or as an ornament. There was, in fact, but one wholesale dealer to be found in the Directory. All others would supply these weapons singly over the counter if asked for. The next clause applied to wholesale consignments. Why should there be any importation of these things? Surely enough of them were made by our own manufacturers. That clause in the other Bill, therefore, he had not meddled with. It was a matter for the Government, and he would only have been called a Protectionist if he had put in any provision of that kind. At the same time, the clause as it stood might make the whole Bill nugatory. The next clause provided that if importers of a pistol failed to comply with the Act they should be liable to a fine of £100, the pistols to be forfeited. That ought to apply to wholesale traders, and not, say, to Civil servants coming home from India, upon whom a fine of £100 would be altogether out of proportion with the other penalties in the Bill. He had left that as it stood. Revolver accidents had increased very much; and, as he had pointed out, these weapons facilitated suicide. He would tell their Lordships a story about a man who went every day to commit suicide on a railway, and laid his neck on the rails, but when the whistles were blown on approaching trains he, not being very firm in his intention, would jump up and run away. At last, one day, tired of his own shilly-shallying, he tied himself down to the rails, and a train went over him. With pistols, however, people often produced fatal results without fully intending them. Men often, too, shot women and then themselves, pretending that they were consenting parties; while it would not be so easy to get a woman to go down with them into a river.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD: My Lords, as representing the Home Office in your Lordships' House, I have to say that the Government intend to offer no opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill. On the contrary, the Home Secretary, from statistics put before him, is quite converted to the fact that some legislation is absolutely necessary in order to put a stop to the dangers that arise, and are ever increasing, from the indiscriminate use and carrying of pistols and revolvers. Last Session, as the noble Lord has said, the Home Secretary introduced a Pistols Bill of his own. The measure, unfortunately, was treated as a contentious one, and though it passed the Second Reading and Committee stage it was blocked at a later stage of the Bill, when the Session was far advanced, and consequently never became law. This is a matter deeply to be regretted, for had it become law undoubtedly many accidents that have since taken place would have been avoided. Now, the noble Lord who has introduced the Bill has admitted, and very fairly so. that he has adopted the original Bill of the Home Secretary as the basis of his own measure. If he will allow me to say so, I think he would have acted more wisely had he taken as his text for his own Bill the original Government Bill in its amended form. Many of those Amendments were adopted at the suggestions of the gunsmiths, who as a body rendered the Home Office great assistance. The interests of their trade is naturally, to a large extent, affected by a Bill of this kind, and noble Lords will, I venture to think, agree with me when I say that these interests are deserving of recognition, and must as far as possible be protected. In addition to ignoring the Amendments to which I have referred, the noble Lord has grafted on the Bill several somewhat drastic Amendments of his own. The chief effect of these alterations is by Clause 1, Sub-section (3), to introduce a new system of licensing by the police; Clause 1, Sub-section (5), to prohibit married women from buying pistols, and confined the privilege to spinsters.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Read the clause.

The Earl of CHESTERFIELD:

"No women other than single women ratepayers may purchase pistols after obtaining a licence from the chief officer of police of their district."

Then by Clause 1, Sub-section (4), and Clause 4, Sub-section (1), the noble Lord proposed to raise the age of those who may not buy or possess a pistol from 18 to 21. Further, he has added an entirely new clause—namely, Clause 5, which will prohibit the manufacture or importation of toy pistols, which seems to be unnecessary; and, lastly, in Clause 7, Sub-section (1), which restricts the carrying of pistols by persons sentenced to penal servitude, he has omitted the words added at the end of the sub-section in the original Bill of the Government, "for a period of five years from the date of release." How far the Government will accept these alterations I am at present unable to say. They are quite willing that the Bill should be read a second time, on the understanding that they reserve to themselves full discretion when the Bill reaches the Committee stage to put down whatever Amendments they may think just, and necessary, and advantageous.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY said, the statement of the noble Lord was more favourable to the Bill than he had expected. He had brought forward the measure in the public interest, and his desire was that it might be thoroughly discussed, so that the public might have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon it. He did not think it was exactly the case that the gunsmiths were in favour of the Home Office Bill, and if the noble Lord would read a recent article in *The Country Gentleman* he would find the opposite view put forward. This Bill had been dictated by a gunsmith on the assumption that Mr. Asquith's Bill was not stringent enough. Noble Lords should not consider the Bill from their own standpoint, of familiarity from childhood with the use of firearms. Railwaymen, porters, and boys in towns had no such knowledge, and their ignorance naturally caused accidents. In regard to his alteration in the case of persons who had suffered penal servitude, he would only say that those criminals lost their civil rights in most countries.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Friday next.

COLONIAL OFFICERS (LEAVE OF ABSENCE) BILL.—(No. 25.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (The Marquess of Ripon): My Lords, the Bill of which I rise to move the Second Reading is extremely small in its object, and it is intended to get rid of an old Act of Parliament which was designed to meet a very different state of things to that which now exists, and for which it has now become altogether unsuited. That is an old Act of George III. Under that Act any person holding office in the colonies is required, on being granted leave of absence, to obtain, as soon as possible, the confirmation of the Secretary of State, and if he does not obtain that confirmation of the leave granted he is obliged to return immediately to the colony. Such a provision is now entirely unsuited to the self-governing colonies, for officers serving in those colonies are in no respect under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the Act therefore has no application to them. The provision, therefore, is found to be very inconvenient and disadvantageous to the Public Services. It is, in fact, altogether obsolete. For some time there has been an intention to deal with the matter, and my predecessor, my noble Friend Lord Knutsford, prepared a similar Bill, but had no opportunity of taking the judgment of Parliament upon it. It has been contemplated for some time by the Colonial Office to deal with this matter on a thorough footing, and an opportunity is now presented when this obsolete law may be altered, and the matter put on a sound and satisfactory footing. For that simple purpose this Bill is proposed, and I beg, therefore, to move that it be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

The Marquess of SALISBURY: May I ask the noble Lord opposite whether he will not take the opportunity of seeing how far the India Office can follow the example of the Colonial Office and recognise that the same state of obsolete legislation exists in India as in the Colonies? The matter was under discussion two or three years ago in this House, and I would direct the noble Lord's attention to the fact that there are restrictions now upon Indian officials, occupying sometimes high positions, which are exceedingly inconvenient, and have no basis in reason whatever.

The Marquess of RIPON: When I was in India I found that was so, and I thought a Bill had been introduced.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: It never went through.

The Marquess of RIPON: I will confer with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India on the subject.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

LAW LIBRARY FOUR COURTS, IRELAND, BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 29.)

House adjourned at five minutes past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 20th April 1894.

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

THE SMALL ISLES.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the parish of Small Isles, off the West Coast of Scotland, comprising four islands, with a population of about 500, is without a resident medical man, and, though from time to time arrangements have been made by the Parochial Board with medical men on the mainland to visit those islands when sent for, these gentlemen have after a short experience resigned, finding the work impracticable on account of the difficulties of communication in rough weather, and the impossibility sometimes of returning to their private practices without serious inconvenience and loss of time; and whether, in view of the heavy adult and infant mortality prevailing there, he will consider the expediency of arranging that a medical man should be appointed to live at Eigg, the most populous island of the group constituting the parish?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The population of the parish of Small Isles, exclusive of shipping, is 433; there are, by the last published Returns, 27 paupers, and no dependants. The medical officer is Dr. Dewar, of Portee, and in urgent cases the Inspector of Poor can obtain the services of a medical man from Arisaig, about eight miles distant. The Board of Supervision inform me that they have no complaints of inadequate attendance on paupers. I may point out that it is open to the general population to subscribe (as is occasionally done elsewhere) for the maintenance of a resident medical man, but that the Secretary for Scotland does not administer any fund applicable to the provision of medical attendance for persons who are not paupers. Moreover, in whichever of the Islands a medical man should reside, there would, however, be occasionally as great difficulty in communicating with the other Islands of the group as in crossing to or from Arisaig.

Dr. MACGREGOR; May I further ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware the County Medical Officer's Report recently issued shows the mortality in this parish to be 30 per 1,000 per annum? Is this not a discreditable state of things in a parish surrounded by the sea? Is the death-rate not more than double what it ought to be, and is it not attributable largely to the want of medical assistance? Could not arrangements be made to have a medical officer resident within call, so as to reduce this mortality which is largely among infants?

Sir G. TREVELYAN: I have already described the extent of the legal powers possessed by the Board. I can add nothing more.

Dr. MACGREGOR: Then I will call attention to the matter on the Estimates.

DUBLIN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Postmaster General how many vacancies exist in the supervising and first class staffs of the Telegraph Department, General Post Office, Dublin; whether it is a fact that at least one of the vacancies has remained open for six months; and whether the appointments to it and others will date back to their creation?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): In the Telegraph Office, Dublin, there are at the present time five vacancies—namely, two on the first class of assistant superintendents and three on the first class of telegraphists. Of the assistant superintendent's vacancies one has existed since the 30th of October last. Whether retrospective effect can be given to the promotions, and, if so, to what extent, are questions which I will consider at the time they are made.

SECOND-CLASS TELEGRAPHISTS IN DUBLIN.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Postmaster General why no answer has yet been given to the Petition of second-class telegraphists in the Dublin General Post Office, sent to him in January last; and if he could state how many Petitions he has received from second-class telegraphists in the United Kingdom for the 12 months ending 31st of March?

Mr. A. MORLEY: The Petition of the second-class telegraphists in the Dublin General Post Office for improved pay, abolition of classification, &c., has been held over pending the Report of the Departmental Committee which I have appointed to consider whether any economies can be introduced into the working of our telegraphic system. The cost, however, of conducting the duties in Dublin is unusually high, and the staff employed there has enjoyed considerable advantages from the promotions consequent on the last revision in 1890-1. Eighteen Memorials from second-class telegraphists in the United Kingdom were received in the year ended the 31st of March last.

Mr. FIELD: When may an answer be expected?

Mr. A. MORLEY: As soon as I receive a Report from the Committee I have appointed to consider the question.

Mr. FIELD: When is it expected the Committee will report.

Mr. A. MORLEY: I believe they have completed their work. They have visited various towns; they are now considering their Report, which will, no doubt, be shortly presented.

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the report of the proceedings at an inquest held by the City Coroner of Belfast upon the body of James Casey, who died last week in the lunatic department of the Belfast Workhouse, from which it appears that the night warder deposed that the deceased was ill for two and a-half hours, suffering from an epileptic fit, that nothing was given to relieve him, and that the doctor was not sent for to see him; whether he will state when this night warder was appointed, and what was his previous experience; whether he is aware that the Coroner's jury added a rider to their verdict, charging the warder with neglect of duty, and suggesting that better care should be taken of the patients in this department; and that the Coroner stated that out of 497 patients in this department 39 deaths had been reported to him since the 31st of December last, while during the same period only 12 deaths had been reported from the District Lunatic Asylum, where there were 700 patients; and if inquiry will be made into the circumstances of Casey's death and as to the treatment of inmates in this department?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): My attention has been called to a report of the proceedings referred to, and I am informed by the Local Government Board that the Guardians have appointed a committee to consider the whole matter on an early day next week. The Board will defer taking any further action in the matter pending the investigation by the Guardians. The night warder, who was appointed in December last, had, I understand, no previous experience of the care and treatment of lunatics. It is only right to add that the Local Government Board have been informed by the resident medical officer of the workhouse that immediately after the deceased man had been seized with the sudden illness which terminated in his death he was seen and attended to by one of the medical officers of the establishment, and that twice afterwards he himself saw the man.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has noticed that the coroner's jury in their verdict stated that proper care was not observed in the appointment of nurses or the general treatment of patients? Is it not a fact that in this workhouse there are 500 lunacy patients whose proper custody there is a matter of legal opinion; whether one in every 12 have not died, and will the right hon. Gentleman move the Local Government Board to hold a sworn inquiry before the Magistrates?

MR. J. MORLEY: This question is now engaging my attention.

Mr. M'Cartan

CARBOLIC ACID.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware that there have been about 50 deaths arising from carbolic acid since the commencement of this year; and whether he will take steps to lessen the temptation to commit suicide by the use of carbolic acid?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The Registrar General cannot give the number of deaths from carbolic acid since the beginning of the year. Forty-two deaths from that cause have been recorded in the pharmaceutical journals, and there are doubtless other cases not reported. It is, I am informed, not expedient to place an article like carbolic acid, which is so largely used for disinfecting and other purposes, under the restrictions of the Pharmacy Act (which would confine the sale exclusively to chemists and druggists), but the Government are considering whether an amendment of the law cannot be introduced by which some precautionary regulations may be applied to the sale of carbolic and other acids. I am afraid that no law will restrain persons bent on committing suicide, but deaths from the accidental use of such compounds may probably be lessened by legislation.

PERJURY IN EVICTION PROCEEDINGS

MR. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has recently received a Memorial from Farrell Tormey, of Mullaghmore, Virginia, County Cavan, setting out the circumstances whereby he was evicted from his house and farm, under a judgment of the High Court, subsequently set aside by the Exchequer Division of such Court, upon the grounds that the affidavit, by virtue of which such judgment had been obtained, had been falsely sworn by one James Tormey; and whether, under the circumstances, he will refer the matter to the Irish Law Officers, in order that the said James Tormey may be prosecuted for perjury, and in order that Walter Tormey, in said Memorial mentioned, may also be prosecuted for perjury and subornation of perjury?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The matter referred to has been before the Law Officers, and on the 11th instant the Sessional Crown Solicitor was directed to institute proceedings in the case for perjury and conspiracy.

LEVEL CROSSINGS ON THE GREAT NORTHERN (IRELAND) RAILWAY.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the mode in which the county road leading from Strabane in the County Tyrone to Lifford in the County Donegal has been carried by the Finn Valley and West Donegal Railway Companies over their line of railway by means of a bridge, immediately adjoining the point where the same road crosses the Great Northern (Ireland) Railway line by means of a level crossing; and whether, having regard to the obviously dangerous risk to which vehicular traffic will thus be exposed by reason of the steep gradient, he will take steps to have the road in question carried over the latter line by a bridge also?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside): My attention has been called to this case. The Board of Trade will consult their Inspecting Officers on the matter, and see if anything can be done.

ENNISKILLEN POST OFFICE.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether frequent complaints have been made both upon the part of officials and the general public regarding insufficient accommodation and want of space in the post office at Enniskillen, which accommodation was curtailed five years ago; whether it is the case that the accommodation in said office is wholly insufficient, and capable only of properly affording accommodation for one-third of the business therein transacted; and will the authorities cause inquiries to be made with the view of establishing a Crown office at Enniskillen?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I am informed that it is not the case that frequent complaints have been received either from the staff or from the public of want of accommodation at the Enniskillen Post Office. So far from the space having been curtailed, the office was enlarged and refitted at considerable expense about three years ago; and it is still considered to be sufficient for the business, which is not increasing. There is no intention of providing a Crown post office at Enniskillen.

OFFICERS' PAY IN INDIA.

Mr. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the command pay of an officer commanding a regiment of European infantry in India is Rs. 400 per mensum, or about 15s. a day at present exchange; and whether in Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, and the West Indies, the command pay is 3s. per diem; and, if so, what is the reason of the difference?

***The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA** (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): The answer to the first question is, "Yes." The second question should properly be addressed to the Secretary of State for War. But I may mention that the pay of officers in India and in the Colonies respectively is fixed on different systems. In the latter, various allowances are drawn in addition to pay which in India are considered as the pay, and so are not drawn separately.

CARSWELL POINT FOGHORN.

Mr. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that the foghorn on Carswell Point, Wigtonshire, outside Loch Ryan, sounds only every three minutes, which in that narrow channel is considered by all masters of vessels insufficient warning in times of dense fog; and will he take steps to remedy this state of things by having, when fogs occur, the horn sounded at least once every minute?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have received no complaint from shipmasters or others of the insufficiency of the fog-signal on Carswell Point, but I will send a copy of the hon. Member's question to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, with whom rests the responsibility of initiating any alteration.

LADY VISITORS TO IRISH PRISONS.

Mr. WEBB (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the total number of prisons in Ireland in which women are confined; and in how many of such prisons lady visitors have been appointed?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The General Prisons Board report that there are 13 large and six minor prisons in Ireland (not including bridewells) in which women are incarcerated. There is no formal appointment by Government of any lady visitors to prisons in Ireland, but in all the large prisons except one—namely, that at Sligo—ladies are permitted by the Board to visit for the purpose of giving religious instruction to female prisoners of their own denominations. In the case of the single prison excepted, the Board have no application from any ladies to be permitted to visit the female prisoners incarcerated therein.

THE "COSTA RICA PACKET."

Mr. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Report of the Law Officers of the Crown, in regard to the recommendations of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales in the case of the *Costa Rica Packet*, has been received; if so, whether there is any objection to stating its purport; and whether it is proposed to invite the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the refusal of the Government of the Hague to award any compensation to the captain, owners, or crew of the *Costa Rica Packet?*

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): 1. The case being now the subject of uncompleted negotiations with the Netherlands Government it is not desirable that the purport of the Law Officers' Opinion should at present be made public. 2. The Opinion of the Law Officers has already been given in regard to the refusal of the Netherlands Government, and a further communication on the subject is being addressed to Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague.

BOLTS AND NUTS FOR THE ADMIRALTY.

Mr. WILSON LLOYD (Wednesbury): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the bolts and nuts supplied on the Admiralty contracts are specified hand made; if so, is he aware that the bolts and nuts now being supplied by the firm who has the present contract are not hand made, but are machine made; and can the Admiralty prevent a contract being varied, without giving notice to those firms who quoted for hand made nuts and bolts?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe): In Admiralty contracts bolts and nuts are not specified to be hand made. The Admiralty do not permit any contract to be varied without their consent.

CHEADLE NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. C. M'LAREN (Leicester, Bosworth): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he can now say from inquiries made whether, in carrying out the requirements of the Education Department, in regard to the National Schools of Cheadle, Staffordshire, the managers are proposing to encroach on the graveyard, either for a playground or any other purpose; and, if so, whether this will receive the sanction of the Department?

Mr. ACLAND: The managers inform me that they have no intention of encroaching on the graveyard for any purpose.

THE ARRAN EVICTIONS.

Mr. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any of the Sheriffs' officers or other persons engaged in serving notices of evictions upon the Arran islanders spoke Irish; and whether the contents of those notices were explained by the legal officers to those tenants who speak Irish only?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The ejectment notices were served by the civil bill officer, who, I believe, speaks Irish. The police state he did not explain the contents of the decrees to the persons served, except in some instances when requested to do so.

PARAFFIN AND DISASTROUS FIRES.

Mr. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a disastrous fire in Northampton Street, Clerkenwell, on Saturday the 24th of March, which resulted in the loss of five lives, and which was caused by the upsetting of a paraffin lamp; whether he can state what was the nature of the oil in question, and what is its flash point; and whether, having regard to this and similar disasters, he will forthwith appoint the Committee already promised to inquire into the whole subject of the Petroleum Acts?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): We have no knowledge whatever of the circumstances of this fire, as these matters do not come under the cognizance of my Department. No Returns are made to me of petroleum accidents. Perhaps the Local Authority (who in this case are the London County Council) have information on the subject, but I have none. As regards the last paragraph, I am considering what ought to be the scope of the inquiry and the terms of Reference of the proposed Committee to inquire into the Petroleum Acts.

MR. PAUL: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the great danger to human life arising from the importation and dissemination of foreign oils at a dangerously low flash point he will consider the desirability of instructing the Committee to report on this matter?

MR. ASQUITH: That raises a point very much debated by experts. I will, however, consider it.

NEW LUNATIC ASYLUM AT PORTRANE.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin County, North, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, now that the question of the apportionment of the expenditure required for providing additional lunatic asylum accommodation for the counties of Dublin, Louth, and Wicklow has been decided by the Privy Council, he will give orders for proceeding immediately with the execution of the proposed works at Portrane, County of Dublin?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Board of Control, in communication with the Asylum Governors, are taking all the steps necessary with a view to having the works commenced at as early a date as is practicable.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS, DUBLIN POST OFFICE.

MR. HAYDEN: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin County, North, I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with reference to his statement on the 29th of December last as to the Memorial of the Second Division Clerks, Secretary's Office, General Post Office, Dublin, on the subject of the application to them of the improved scale lately applied to the Second Division Clerks, Secretary's Office, London, whether any answer has yet been given to that Memorial; and, if not, what is the reason of the delay?

MR. A. MORLEY: I have not yet had the opportunity of dealing with the Memorial of the Second Division Clerks, Secretary's office, General Post Office, Dublin; many other questions, which appeared to me more urgent, having had precedence of it. I shall hope shortly to examine the whole subject.

GERMAN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the result of the inquiry he promised into the importation of German prison-made goods; what steps the Government proposes to take to secure that the pencils, paper, and other articles Ministers purchase from foreigners shall not be made by German prisoners, earning from 3d. to 1s. a day; and if his attention has been called to the letter from Herr Christian Abner, of Cologne, one of the concessionaires of the convict labour in Branweiler Prison, in *The Hardwareman*, of the 7th of April, 1894, who declares himself to have a factory of English patent goods, and boasts that he also has a house in England for the sale of his goods; and, in such case, if he is assured that Herr Abner, his agents, *employés*, and customers in England are not liable to prosecution under the Merchandise Marks Act?

MR. MUNDELLA: I am informed by the Commissioners of Customs that they have no cognizance of the importation from Germany of prison-labour made goods. They state that any goods imported bearing the words "Reliable" or "Perfection" would be dealt with under the provisions of the Merchandise Marks

Act. Then with regard to Herr Abner and the capital advertisement which has been given to his cheap brushes. This gentleman has, I learn, an English patent for his carpet sweeper, and, as long as he conforms to the law, I know of no reason why he should not have a place of business in this country for the sale of his patented article and the other goods in which he deals.

Mr. DARLING (Deptford): Is it not a fact that the pencils supplied to the House are marked "V.R. Civil Service. Bavaria." Are they obtained from Bavaria; and, if so, from what establishment?

Mr. MUNDELLA: That may be so, but I have nothing to do with the purchase of pencils or paper for the House. That is part of the duties of the Stationery Department.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Who is responsible. Are the facts as stated?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I do not know; I am not.

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: If the right hon. Gentleman will give me notice I will do my best to answer the question.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, as he appears to be unable to do anything to protect British labour from German prison competition, if he is aware that among the prohibited articles in Schedule C of the new British tariff framed by the Dominion of Canada—

> "Goods manufactured or produced wholly or in part by prison labour, or which have been made within or in connection with any prison, gaol, or penitentiary,"

are absolutely prohibited from importation?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I was not aware that that restriction was in the Canadian tariff. I do not know how the Custom officers are to discriminate between goods made wholly or partially in prison, any more than they are to discriminate between goods partially made abroad and finished in England.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Will the right hon. Gentleman communicate with the Foreign Office on the matter?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The question should be put to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I have nothing to do with International commodities.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Then I will put the question to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

*Sir E. GREY: I am sorry I cannot answer it. I have only just entered the House, and do not know what the question referred to me is about.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I will give the hon. Baronet notice of the question.

BOARD OF TRADE PUBLICATIONS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury under what head the accounts of *The Board of Trade Journal* and *The Labour Gazette* will be presented to Parliament, and if, before the Vote is taken, a Statement can be laid upon the Table showing the success or otherwise of these publications on the part of the Board of Trade, and what proportion of the receipts is derived from sales and what proportion from advertisements?

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham): *The Board of Trade Journal* and *The Labour Gazette* are managed under different arrangements. *The Journal* is treated on the ordinary footing, the cost of paper, printing, and binding being charged to sub-head K of the Stationery Office Vote, while the proceeds of sale are carried to the credit sub-head Q of that Vote. The work of editing is performed in the commercial branch of the Commercial Labour and Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, and charged to sub-head R of that Vote. The work of compiling and editing *The Gazette* is done in the labour branch. The printing and publication are done by a contractor for his own profit, subject to a gratuitous supply of such copies as are required for the Public Service, including 7,000 distributed by the Labour Department. I cannot give the receipts from advertisements, as they form part of the contractor's profit. It is not intended to present to Parliament any separate accounts of these any more than of other Government publications. For information on the other points raised in the question I must refer my hon. Friend to the President of the Board of Trade.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I asked the President of the Board of

Trade, but he was unable to give me any information on the subject.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I beg your pardon. I gave the hon. Gentleman all the information my Department possessed.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if the contract for printing *The Labour Gazette* will be laid upon the Table? Also, is the Resolution of this House of 1891 observed in the contract?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I do not know whether it is desirable to lay the contract on the Table. I have no doubt that the Resolution of the House is embodied in this, as in all other Stationery Office contracts.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Will the right hon. Gentleman let me see the contracts personally?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I will inquire if that can be done.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Can the right hon. Gentleman say, with regard to the compilation of *The Labour Gazette*, which he omitted from his list, what it costs, and in what part of the Votes it is to be found, in the same way as he has told us with regard to the other matters he mentioned?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The compilation is done by the Board of Trade, so that the matter is not within my cognisance. I am anxious, however, to afford all the information in my power.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Are we to understand that a Government contract is a private matter that cannot be shown in this House?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I will answer that question. No doubt the House may, if it thinks fit, see the contract, but it is not worth while to encumber the Papers with all these petty details. The Government have no object in concealing anything of this kind, but it is carrying things to excess to lay these contracts on the Table, unless there is some specific reason for believing the matter requires particular attention.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Will the right hon. Gentleman show me the contract if I call upon him to-morrow?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Oh, yes; I will show the hon. Member anything he likes.

MILITARY OFFICERS AT IRISH RACE MEETINGS.

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that a General Order has been issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland that officers attending the Punchestown races are required to wear tall hats on both days; whether an Order enjoining officers who attend races in their private capacity to wear a particular dress is a legal Order; and whether such Order has been sanctioned by H.R.H the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): I have no information on this subject; but from my knowledge of the General Officer Commanding the Forces in Ireland, I have no doubt that if he has issued such a direction it has not been without good cause. In any case, the matter hardly deserves the importance the hon. Member has given to it.

THE COST OF THE SCOTCH POLICE.

Mr. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the provision made in Section 22, Sub-section (3), of "The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889," whereby a fixed sum is set aside each year for distribution amongst the Police Authorities in Scotland as a "contribution" towards the cost of pay and clothing, is, in view of the yearly increasing cost, not generally regarded as an equitable arrangement; and whether it is possible to revert to the arrangement formerly in force, whereby Government contributed one-half of the cost of pay and clothing of every police force?

Sir G. TREVELYAN: The arrangement referred to by the hon. Member, under which the distribution of £155,000 to the Police Authorities in Scotland is stereotyped, whereas in England half the cost of the police is given to the Local Authority, is framed upon the financial scheme at present existing between England, Scotland, and Ireland. Under the Local Government Acts England gets 80-100th of one-half of the Probate Duty; Scotland gets 11-100th; and Ireland 9-100th. The distribution of this sum and of the other sums assigned to Local Government purposes in England and Scotland is made in accordance with the several Acts relating to the English and Scottish Local Taxation Accounts. These Acts settled the distribution of the share which fell to each country in fair accordance with what was the view of their Representatives at the time. England preferred, in the appropriation of its share, to take half the cost of Police; Scotland preferred to stereotype the grant at the sum of £155,000; the surplus in each case being devoted to other services in England and Scotland respectively. If this stereotyped arrangement in respect of the Scottish Police Grant is removed, the sum available for other services in that country would require to be correspondingly reduced. If this arrangement of the share given to Scotland does not meet the present views of the Scottish Representatives, Parliament would be able to alter it by amending the necessary Acts and distributing the money otherwise than it is distributed at present.

SICK LEAVE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North West Ham, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what Departments of the Civil Service are under Treasury control as regards the amount of sick leave granted to assistant clerks; what are the names of the Departments not under Treasury control; what are the Regulations as to sick leave to assistant clerks in force in those Departments; and what are the Regulations as to sick leave applying to assistant clerks appointed prior to July, 1891?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The Treasury exercises control over all Departments in all matters of organisation, including sick leave. My former answer referred to Departments directly subordinate to the Treasury—such as the Revenue Departments. I could not undertake to make an exhaustive classification of all Departments under the two heads, because such classification would involve interpretations of Acts of Parliament and other instruments without number. No Regulations as to sick leave to assistant clerks have been laid down by the Treasury except in the Departments subordinate to the Treasury. No assistant clerks within the meaning of the Rule as to sick leave were appointed before July, 1891.

In reply to Mr. Gibson Bowles,

Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, that any representations forwarded to the Treasury would, of course, be carefully considered.

INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT.

Mr. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has observed the statement in the public Press that the German Emperor has submitted a scheme of disarmament to the King of Italy, to the Emperor of Austria, and to the Czar of Russia, and proposed a Conference of the Powers thereon; whether any communications of that nature have reached the Foreign Office; and whether any such suggestions, if they should be addressed to this country, would be favourably entertained by Her Majesty's Government?

***Sir E. GREY**: I have seen some statements in the Press with reference to proposals for disarmament, but no communications on the subject have reached the Foreign Office. As Her Majesty's Government have already stated, they would give their best considerations to any practical proposals that were made.

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S STATUE.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the statue of Lord Beaconsfield was decorated on the 19th instant by his authority, and whether any officials of the Board of Works were employed in its decoration?

***The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS** (Mr. H. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): According to the practice in previous years, permission has been given for the decoration of the statue to such persons as have been accustomed to apply for it. No one was employed by the Office of Works in the decoration.

Mr. CREMER: I do not gather from the answer of the right hon. Gentleman whether any officials of the Board of Works had been employed there. It has been emphatically stated in *The St. James's Gazette* that they were so employed, and all night long, too.

***Mr. H. GLADSTONE**: I stated that no one was employed by the Board of Works in the decoration. An official of the Office was employed to the extent of unlocking the gate for the authorised persons to enter.

DESERTIONS FROM BRITISH SHIPS.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the number of seamen who have deserted British ships in Australian and American ports during the year 1893; if he can state the amount of money forfeited as wages by such seamen, and whether the master of a ship from which a seaman may desert renders any account of such moneys; and, if so, to whom; and if no such account is rendered, whether the Board of Trade will take steps to see that such an account is furnished by every master of a British ship showing the amount earned by all seamen who may desert at the ports aforesaid, the amount advanced to them in money and for clothing, together with all vouchers for the same, and that the balance due at the time of desertion be handed over to a Representative of the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

Mr. MUNDELLA: The Board of Trade have no record of the numbers of seamen who desert from British ships, and they have no means of ascertaining the amount of wages forfeited by such seamen, as the master is not bound to render any account. The proposal of the hon. Member, that masters should be required to furnish a detailed statement of the amount earned by deserters and the advances made, cannot be enforced without further legislation.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: Is it not the fact that the captain of every British ship is bound to make a Report at the end of the voyage of the number of men who deserted, where they deserted, and what wages were due to them at the time of desertion?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I am told that is not the case. My information is that the Board of Trade have no means of ascertaining the amount of wages forfeited. I have that information from the Marine Department.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: Is there no sufficient power at the present time to secure the collection of such information?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I am assured there are no powers under the Merchant Shipping Acts to enforce such Returns. To get them would render necessary fresh legislation. I will inquire further, however, if the hon. Gentleman still entertains any doubt on the point.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): Have the Board of Trade no power, when deserters apply for money due to them, to bring such deserters before the authorities for punishment?

Mr. MUNDELLA: A man who deserts does not usually make any such application.

EARLY MORNING WORK IN THE NAVY.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he is aware that seamen on board of Her Majesty's ships at Portsmouth have during the past four weeks been ordered to holystone and wash decks at 4 o'clock in the morning; and whether such Orders are general in Her Majesty's Navy?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: A telegram sent to Portsmouth in consequence of my hon. Friend's question has elicited the following reply:—

> "Her Majesty's ships at Portsmouth have, during the last four weeks, never scrubbed decks earlier than 6.30 a.m.; and they have not during that period been holystoned at all. This is in accordance with the usual practice; and the few ships that holystone at all do not do so more frequently than once a week."

UGANDA.

Sir GEORGE BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in view of the indefinite postponement of the promised Debate on the Uganda Settlement, whether he can give any assurances that the British administration will be meanwhile maintained without detriment or prejudice to the final settlement of the question?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I hope that the discussion on the Uganda settlement will not be very long postponed. Of course, in the meantime, British administration there will be maintained.

Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Papers, which were promised in time for the discussion this week, will be circulated with reference to the Uganda settlement?

Sir W. HARCOURT: They will be circulated to-morrow.

"THE SALE OF GOODS ACT, 1893."

Mr. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that, owing to the fact that "The Sale of Goods Act, 1893," received the Royal Assent on 20th February, 1894, and, by Section 63, came into operation on the 1st January preceding, great trouble and uncertainty as to the law is occasioned to merchants and others; and whether the Government intention was that this Statute should be retrospective in its operation as to contracts of sale; if not, will the Government propose a measure of relief?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am not aware of the circumstances of this case, but I am told that the result is the product of the science of blocking which prevented the Bill from coming down from the House of Lords. The Bill has been amended in the House of Commons, has gone back to the Lords, and amended there, and blocked in the House of Commons; so that, in point of fact, the Bill did not pass at the time expected, a circumstance which is to be deplored. I am informed that the Bill is merely a codification Bill, and does not make any material alteration in the law; but if it does, I will have the matter examined and remedied if possible.

Mr. DARLING: Will the right hon. Gentleman as soon as possible announce whether he can take steps to settle this matter, otherwise there may be very expensive litigation.

Sir W. HARCOURT: If the hon. Member will kindly furnish me with the information at his disposal as to the difficulty which has arisen, it will assist very much in the inquiry.

DISEASE IN THE ARMY.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has noticed the increase of venereal diseases amongst the troops, according to Return No. 509, Army (Average Numbers), made to the House in January last; whether he is aware that the percentage of cases of the most severe form of the disease has been trebled during the last 14 years at the military stations of Gibraltar, Malta, and South Africa; that the percentage has been raised by seven times in the West Indies; and that the increase in India is decimating our troops; and what steps he can take to check and remedy a disease which ruins so many of our soldiers?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Yes, Sir; I have noticed the statistics of venereal disease referred to in the question; but there are such unaccountable fluctuations in them that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to deduce any conclusion from the figures. In the case, however, of India, the increase is certainly such as to demand serious consideration; and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India is giving his attention, in communication with the Indian Government, to certain proposals by the Army Sanitary Committee, which will, it is hoped, without reviving in any way the measures to which this House has objected, tend to improve materially the health of the European force in India.

Mr. JEFFREYS: Will the right hon. Gentleman look at the Returns for the West Indies? These are still more alarming.

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The West Indies stations are among those to which I refer, as exhibiting such unaccountable fluctuations.

DEATH AFTER VACCINATION.

Mr. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the death of a child named Simeon Dawson, who died on the 3rd of March last after much suffering following on vaccination performed on the 13th January last at Bury, in Lancashire; whether he is aware that the doctor who operated on and attended the child gave a certificate of death, "Primary Vaccination; Secondary Pyæmia," and that the Registrar of Deaths declined to receive the certificate, but gave an order for burial; whether the Registrar sent up the above certificate to the Local Government Board, and was he justified in his refusal; what reply or communication has been made to him on the subject; and whether information was given of this case to the Royal Commission on Vaccination?

The SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir W. Foster, Derby, Ilkeston): The only information that the Local Government Board have as to the cause of the death of the child referred to is contained in the certified copy of the entry with regard to the death in the Register of Deaths for the district. According to this copy, the cause of death as entered in the Register was "Vaccination; pyæmia," certified by J. Silverwood, L.R.C.P. The death appears to have taken place on March 3 last, and to have been registered on March 5. The Board are informed that there is no foundation for the suggestion that the Registrar declined to receive the medical certificate referred to. The Board received from the Registrar the certified copy of the entry in the Register on March 6, and on the same day the particulars of the case were forwarded to the Royal Commission on Vaccination.

Mr. HOPWOOD: For what reason was this particular certificate sent up to the Local Government Board? Is it the rule to send such certificates?

Sir W. FOSTER: The Registrars in the ordinary course inform the Local Government Board of all cases of death after vaccination.

BALTIMORE MAILS.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the mails are conveyed by car from Skibbereen to Baltimore; and whether, in view of the fact that Baltimore is an important fishing station, he will consider the advisability of having them conveyed by train, and thereby give a better postal service to the fish buyers and the other business people of Baltimore?

Mr. A. MORLEY: The mail car between Skibbereen and Baltimore affords fairly convenient accommodation, the arrival at Baltimore being at 7.45 a.m., and the despatch at 4.45 p.m., and it is necessary to maintain the car for the service of the intermediate district. No advantage would be derived as regards delivery by the use of the railway, and although a later despatch might be given, such an arrangement would entail further expense, which I should not feel justified in sanctioning. Even now the mail service in the neighbourhood involves a very heavy loss.

ART EXHIBITIONS IN GLASGOW.

Mr. C. M'LAREN (Leicester, Bosworth): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Municipal Authorities of Glasgow are empowered by statute to exercise censorship over or otherwise interfere with the exhibition of works of art in that city; whether he is aware that the Chief Constable has attempted to interdict the exhibition by private dealers of reproductions of works by Sir Frederick Leighton, Mr. G. F. Watts, and Mr. Poynter; and, if so, on what grounds; and whether the police in other parts of the United Kingdom have any right to interfere in matters of taste, and deprive the art-loving public of becoming acquainted with works which have been shown in the galleries of the Royal Academy?

***The LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan, &c.): The Clerk to the Glasgow Police Commissioners informs me that the Municipal Authorities in that city found upon the provisions of the local Glasgow Police Act of 1892 to the effect that—

> "No public show of any description whatever, whether in open ground or in any house or building, or caravan or tent, &c., shall be opened or set up without the permission of the Magistrates' Committee,

as justifying interference with the exhibition referred to in the question. I believe, although I am not definitely informed upon the point, that the question of law whether such an exhibition is a public show within the meaning of the Act is now *sub judice*, and I therefore refrain from expressing an opinion upon it. The clerk to the Police Commissioners is not aware that the Chief Constable has attempted to interdict the exhibition of the works mentioned in the second paragraph of the question. In regard to the third paragraph, I should not suppose that the police in other places have right to interfere with the exhibition of works which do not offend against public decency or morality, but I do not know what the powers conferred by particular local Acts may be.

PROFESSORS IN QUEEN'S COLLEGES IN IRELAND.

Dr. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether Professors in the Royal College of Science in Ireland, appointed at the same time or before some of the Professors of the Queen's Colleges, are, like those Professors, outside the provisions of the Order in Council of 15th August, 1890, whereby retirement from office on reaching the age of 65 is made compulsory?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: No, Sir; the Professors of the Royal College of Science in Ireland are undoubtedly, in the opinion of the Treasury, subject to the provisions of the Order in Council of the 15th of August, 1890.

THE NEW SPIRIT DUTY.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will lay upon the Table of the House, in sufficient time for their examination before the proposals of the Budget Bill are again considered, a Return showing the amount contributed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively, on account of the Spirit Duties in the last financial year; and a Return showing the amount expected to be contributed by Ireland and Great Britain respectively during the current year, on account of the proposed increase in those duties; and whether he will take care that the accounts for the current year are so kept that it will be possible at the end of each quarter to show the amount contributed by Ireland and Great Britain respectively, on account of all the new taxes proposed in the Budget Bill?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The discussion upon the Spirit Duties will not come on until after the Resolutions have been passed. When that has been done, the Second Reading of the Budget Bill will be taken. I hope before that—on Monday or on Tuesday next—to give the House such information on the subject as I can furnish.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will give the House an opportunity of judging of the proportions of the remaining taxation which will fall upon England, Ireland, and Scotland respectively? I do not think the information supplied should be only partial.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will give that information on Monday or Tuesday next. I suppose the right hon. Gentleman was not here when I explained that my reason for only proposing the extra duty for one year was that there was going to be a certain inquiry into the incidence of taxation, and that, therefore, we could not this year undertake to determine how it was relatively borne.

Mr. FIELD: On what day will the Second Reading of the Budget Bill be taken?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Bill will be introduced as soon as possible after the Resolutions are passed. I have reason to hope, from communications I have received, that the Resolutions will be passed on Tuesday, and after they have been reported the Budget Bill will be introduced at once. No doubt the House will require some little time to consider the Bill before the Second Reading comes on, and therefore I am afraid it will not be possible to take the discussion on the Second Reading of the Bill until the week after next.

THE WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT BILL.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I may take this opportunity of saying that I have not been able until now to say positively what will be the business on Thursday; but now from information I have received I hope that we shall be able on that day to introduce the Motion for the First Reading of the Bill for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church.

THE NEW ESTATE DUTY.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with regard to the Statement he circulated this morning as to the effect of the new Estate Duty, how he intends to ascertain the capital value of property assessed for the new duty, and whether he can give the House any information on the subject at once, or whether he will give it as part of his statement on Monday?

Sir W. HARCOURT: From my point of view I think I should give the information now. The capital value or the principal value, the market value, the selling value, or the realisable value—you may use any phrase you like—must be ascertained with reference to any particular commodity by the best methods you have of ascertaining it. If you want to ascertain the principal value of the funds you have only to look at the newspapers, but there are many other things the value of which you cannot ascertain in that way. To ascertain the principal value of land, houses, plate, jewels, pictures, and so forth, you must take the opinion of experts—that is, the best opinion you can get on the subject. My opinion is, that the method in regard to the land must follow the same lines. I once asked a surveyor what his science was supposed to be for which the public paid so highly, and he answered "Well, Sir, we are supposed to know by experience what the public will give for any particular thing." I can give a particular example of the value of expert opinion. I remember once going to a sale at Christie's, where I saw a picture which I thought a very admirable one. It was by Sir Joshua Reynolds of a celebrated character in history, the last great true Whig Prime Minister, Lord Rockingham. I asked an expert what the value of the picture at a sale would be, and he said, "Well, if it were a picture of an unknown lady, it would be worth about £5,000; but as it is only a picture of a man and a Prime Minister, it will fetch between £500 or £600." The picture was sold, and I was very anxious to find what it sold for. The sum was £550, which showed how accurate the estimate was, even in such commodities as the pictures of Prime Ministers. We are bound to rely on the opinions of experts as to the value of such rare commodities, but in order to correct any mistake or injustice in the valuation there is an appeal. It seems to me that this is a common-sense view of the subject.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Whatever may be the market value of pictures or jewels, the right hon. Gentleman must remember that in many parts of the country there is absolutely no market value for land at all. That is one point. Another point on which I have to ask is: Does the right hon. Gentleman suppose that in calculating the market value of land and houses the Inland Revenue authorities will make those deductions for repairs, insurance, &c., which are allowed in levying Income Tax?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think I had better reserve those details till Monday.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman on Monday give an estimate of the cost to the taxpayer of the heavy fees necessary for valuation?

Mr. DARLING: With reference to the difficulty of valuing works of art, does the right hon. Gentleman know that the only market for portraits of Whig statesmen is the Tory Party?

[The question was not answered.]

RICHMOND DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM BUILDING SCHEME.

Dr. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether his attention has been called to a resolution passed by the Dublin Corporation on the 16th instant dealing with the question of the injustice which an Order of the Privy Council will inflict on the citizens of Dublin with reference to the Richmond District Lunatic Asylum building scheme; and will the right hon. Gentleman propose legislation on the subject to ensure the relief of the citizens, and will he also take care that the scheme is postponed until such time as the question of the incidence of taxation in reference to this matter can be settled?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have had my attention directed to the matter, but have not yet had time to look into it. I will examine the Papers as soon as possible, and take the course which such examination may show to be desirable.

THE IRISH LAND ACTS.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary when he proposes to place on the Paper the names of the Select Committee to inquire into the Irish Land Acts?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The delay is not due to us. I hope on Monday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [2nd April],

> "That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47, shall apply to the said Standing Committee:
>
> That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with 15 other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged:
>
> That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

Main Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, it appeared to him that the vice of the proposal of the Government was that it was partial and unfair in its application. It was partial because it could not be extended to England, and it was unfair because it was a departure from the principle, on which Select and Grand Committees had been hitherto appointed, of representing the actual division of parties in the House. He would ask the Government whether they could not, within a range of alteration that was conceivable and admissible, make this proposition for a Scotch Grand Committee one that could be extended to similar Grand Committees, and one that could be usefully adopted without dislocating the machinery of the House, and without producing any of the extreme inconvenience and injustice which would result from the adoption of the proposal now submitted? He was one of those who had had the privilege of considering the advisability of the appointment of Grand Committees before they came into existence at all. He had been a member of the large Committee appointed some years ago to consider the state of public business and to devise some machinery for simplifying it and making it easy. It was upon the recommendations of that Committee that the Grand Committees were established. The great and essential principle then proposed and accepted was that the composition of the Grand Committee should correspond to the composition of the House. They conceived that there should be that correspondence, otherwise they thought there might be contrariety between the action of the Committee and the action of the House as controlled and modified by the policy of the Government for the time being. They thought that if they wished to keep the gear in working order and make the Grand Committees something that they could avail of to facilitate and develop public business, they must make them as far as possible correspond with the composition of the House. They felt that each Grand Committee should be a microcosm of the House, representing all divisions and Parties in it. But he asked himself whether it was necessary to carry out that idea of making the Grand Committees an absolute miniature of the House. One of the main objects they had in view was, whilst making the balance of the Grand Committee correspond to the balance of the House, to see whether they could not modify the composition of the Grand Committees so as to introduce a greater or less local element on particular Bills—so as to have a Grand Committee representing in its composition the composition of the House in this respect: that the balance on it corresponded with the balance in the House, and possessing in its several elements a correspondence with the several elements of the House. Would it not be possible to have a Scotch Grand Committee and a Welsh Grand Committee and other similar Committees which would correspond faithfully to the balance of Parties in the House, so that their action would never be at variance with the policy of the House itself, and yet within whose composition they would have a predominant representation of the particular local element interested? By this means they would avoid the danger of having the labour of the Grand Committee thrown away. The Members of the Select Committee to which he had referred felt that the House did not do all the work that was wanted of it, although it did all that could reasonably be expected of it. The Grand Committees they proposed were part of the machinery they conceived for the purpose of making more easy and expeditious the work of the House. There were still great complaints—and he thought just ones—as to the tardiness of work; and the great question before them was, if these complaints came from different parts of the country—Could they not, without departing from the main principle that had governed their action on the former occasion, conceive a Committee which could undertake and carry through work which the House could not undertake with great advantage to the House itself, and greatly to the satisfaction of those Members and constituencies who at present complained of the dilatoriness and insufficiency of the work? With regard to this particular question of a Grand Committee for Scotland, he confessed that he saw great advantage in it if such a Committee could be made to work in harmony with the House. There was an immense difference in the organisation and in the administration of the law in England and Scotland. Scotland had a different machinery for its judicature, and a fundamentally different code of laws. The law of property, whether of movables or of immovables, was different in Scotland from the law in England. The law of family relations was different. If a Scotch Bill were submitted to a Grand Committee which would have a large predominance of Scotch Representatives, while preserving a faithful resemblance to the balance of Parties in the House as a whole, there would be brought to the consideration of that Bill a knowledge of the motives that had animated the people of Scotland itself and their reasons for the particular amendment or change of the law which they desired which might be a great assistance to the Committee. For his own part, he should not look with apprehension on the conduct of business by a Committee on which there was a large Scotch element, if at the same time the representation of other Members was such that the balance of the Committee corresponded with the balance of the House. If they adhered to that principle they would be able to go far beyond what the Government proposed. Under the present proposal the Government could not set up an English Grand Committee, but under the conditions he suggested that would be possible. In the same way, while the Unionist Government could not have set up a Scotch Grand Committee under such a proposal as the present, they might have done so under the plan he recommended. His proposal would not be difficult to work out if it were taken in hand in a business-like sense. It could be made to apply to different parts of the Kingdom, or it might be adopted in other ways. Everybody recognised the difference between Scotch and English Institutions; and if he were told that by his plan he was favouring disintegration and Home Rule, he should reply that he was taking a step in quite the opposite direction. In dealing with touchy people it was best to humour their weaknesses. They should humour weaknesses all round. Let them do so in the case of Scotland. Scotland has a history—an independent history. Scotland had annexed England, and having done that they were constrained to take a back seat. In such circumstances it was necessary to be very tender and delicate in our relations with Scotland. He was ready to recognise the sterling qualities of Scotchmen, and he carefully refrained from using the word "English" to describe the inhabitants of Great Britain. He did not even use the word "British" when he wished to speak of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland. If it were possible to bring these discontented persons to the conviction that there was a way of allowing them to have "a little fling" now and then in discussing their own projects, even though they might not be able to control all the results, much would be done to nullify and destroy the feeling of separation instead of developing it. He had spoken of Scotland only, but he did not shrink from proposing to extend the same principle of Grand Committees to other parts of the country. A considerable part of the argument he had submitted to the House was this—that if the principle he had suggested were adopted and acted on, not only each nation—if there were nations in the United Kingdom, which he was slow to acknowledge—but each large interest, might occasionally obtain a Special Grand Committee for the projects in which it was concerned, always subject to the cardinal, governing, and indispensable principle of the balance of the Committee corresponding with the balance of the House. It might be said—"You will lose all the advantages we Scotch Members want to secure for the Scotch Committee if this plan were adopted. After all, we should be voted down on the Scotch Committees, and we should find ourselves sometimes in a minority—not in the present, but in a future Parliament." He thought that those who used that argument had not realised the great difference between Committees and the House itself. The thing which was most galling in the procedure of the House, and the spectacle they had often witnessed was this—in Committee of the whole House discussion was largely carried on by those interested, and arguments were advanced which told upon the minds and convictions of those who were onlookers and more or less impartial. Often, if a Division were taken among those present during the discussion, a particular proposition would be carried, though it was actually defeated by the votes of Members who flocked in when the Division was called, who were totally unacquainted with the circumstances under discussion, who had heard none of the arguments, and who simply voted blindly as they were told. In this way not only the judgment of the particular persons and localities interested was overruled, but also the judgment of others who had been present in Committee and had listened to the arguments. In Grand Committees it was impossible to have this influx of Members who had not heard the discussion, and consequently Members of a Grand Committee were much more open to conviction than Committees of the House itself. It constantly happened in Grand and Select Committees that stout Party men, having heard the arguments, came to the conclusion that there was a good deal to be said for the other side, and voted with those whom they opposed in the House. Thus, in the Welsh and Scotch Grand Committees constituted according to his suggestion, the proceedings of the Committees would be largely controlled by the arguments of the Welsh and Scotch elements in them, although they might not form a majority of the Committees. He did not think the principle he recommended would be difficult to carry out if frankly adopted. He would suggest, by way of illustration, one or two figures for the consideration of the House. He could not but feel impatient with the levity and want of consideration with which this proposal of the Government had been put before the House. It was a proposal which confessedly could only be applied in a haphazard way, which would be incapable of application in all Parliaments and in relation to all parts of the Kingdom. It certainly seemed to him one of the most thoughtless and ill-conceived suggestions ever submitted to the House. It was proposed that the Scotch Members, with 15 others, or 87 in all, should constitute a Grand Committee; but how the other 15 Members were to be selected did not appear from the Resolution. He was surprised not to have heard some Member of the Committee of Selection ask the House for some guidance on the point. As a general rule, they received instructions as to how to put Members on Committees. How were they to select the 15 Members who were to be added? That was another illustration of the crudity of the proposal. If, on the other hand, the 87 Members were to be so selected that the division among them corresponded with the division of Parties in the House, then, since 87 was about one-eighth of the total number of Members in the House, the Government ought to have on the Committee a majority rather over one-eighth of the Party majority in the House. This would give the Government a majority of five, and the 87 Members would thus be divided into 46 supporters of the Government and 41 Members of the Opposition. As many as was desirable of the 46 supporters of the Government might be Scotchmen, and all the Scotch Members of the Opposition might be included in the 41 Representatives of the Opposition on the Committee. It might also be desirable to bring in Scotchmen representing English constituencies. He would suggest that the majority of 46 should be composed of 40 Scotch Members and six Englishmen, Welshmen, and Irishmen. The minority of 41 should be composed of 23 Scotch Members and 18 other opponents of the Government. If they gave the Government a majority of five, that would fairly correspond to the division of Parties in the House itself, 46 Members being on the side of the

Government and 41 on the side of the Opposition. He had been arguing upon the suggestion that the number of the Committee should be 87, but they might have some other number, allowing, proportionally, a larger number of Scotch Members. They might do the same thing in regard to England, not, of course, by bringing in all the English Members, but by having an English Grand Committee corresponding with the balance of English opinion in the House. If the Government could see their way to adopt some suggestion of this kind in their proposal, which would no doubt be a considerable alteration, but which would, he thought, effect all the advantages claimed for the proposal by the Government, then he thought they would be introducing machinery which would be capable of great extension and at the same time capable of being used. The views which he had submitted to the House were embodied in two Amendments which stood on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Partick, and which laid down the proposition that the composition of the Grand Committee as a whole should correspond to the composition of the House as a whole, but, subject to that political correspondence and to the balance of Parties in Grand Committee and in the House as a whole, the Committee of Selection should be instructed to introduce as many Scotch Members as they could in the composition of the Committee. That was an Amendment which, he thought, deserved the most careful consideration.

*MR. SPEAKER: That Amendment would be out of Order.

MR. COURTNEY: I am very sorry to hear that declaration. I had heard a rumour to the effect, but I was not prepared for a distinct declaration that it was out of Order.

*MR. SPEAKER: I will tell the right hon. Gentleman why the Amendment would be out of Order. I may say, first, that the course which the right hon. Gentleman has taken is subject to some inconvenience. He is, of course, quite within his right in intervening before the next Amendment is called and speaking on the Main Question, but he has gone over the whole subject and anticipated the discussion which would more properly arise on several Amendments upon the Paper. There is on the Paper an Amendment which, I think, goes to the root of the point he is raising and which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Whitehaven, but it will not be open to any hon. Member to move an Amendment inviting the House to depart from the decision taken by the negativing of the Amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, and thus deciding that the whole of the Scotch Members shall form part of the Committee. It is impossible to neutralise the presence of those Scotch Members on the Committee, for that would be reversing the decision to which the House has already come. There is, however, an Amendment to the effect that instead of 15 there should 31 added Members on the Committee for the purpose of producing in the Scotch Committee as near a microcosm of the House as possible; but beyond that it would be quite impossible to go, looking to the principles which govern our Debates.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I ask your opinion, Sir, upon an Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for the Partick Division? It does not exclude any Scottish Member from the Committee, but contemplates the addition to the Committee of such other Members as may make the Committee a reflection of the composition of the House.

*MR. SPEAKER: That is what I was saying just now, and I thought that Amendment was out of Order. I thought that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Whitehaven was going as near the point of Order as possible, though still in Order as altering the constitution of the Committee, assuming always that the Scottish Members are admitted to the Committee in bulk.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I hope, Sir, we may understand from the direction you have so clearly laid down that the proper course now is that we should go on with the Amendments as they stand on the Paper, and not go into a general disquisition. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

MR. COURTNEY rose, but——

SIR W. HARCOURT (refusing to give way) continued: I am in possession of the House. [*Cries of* "No," *and* "Order!"] I am speaking to Order, and I am submitting that the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin is entirely out of Order. He is going back. [*Cries of* "Order!"] I am going to take the opinion of Mr. Speaker whether or not, in your opinion, Sir, it would be regular that we should now go into a general discussion of the whole subject which was under discussion upon the Amendment of the Leader of the Opposition? I understood you, Sir, to lay down that that was not a regular or convenient course, and that the proper course to take was to proceed with the Amendments as they stand on the Paper. [*Opposition cries of* "Order!"] I have a perfect right to submit that.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I rise to Order, Sir. I beg to ask you whether the right hon. Gentleman is in Order when, under the pretext of putting a question to you, he declares his opinion of the Order and convenience of this House?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg, Sir——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg, Sir, to remonstrate in the interests of good manners in the House.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I hope that I may be able to allay any heat and prevent any collision between gentlemen in this House. I did not say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin was out of Order. The right hon. Gentleman is almost the last person in the House who is likely to be out of Order. I only mentioned that I thought the course he was pursuing would be inconvenient, for this reason—that after all the Amendments are disposed of it would be perfectly competent for the right hon. Gentleman to take a general survey of the situation and re-open discussion on the Main Question. But if instead of that, which he is entitled to do, he raises a discussion now upon the general question before I call the next Amendment in Order—namely, that of the noble Lord the Member for West Edinburgh—I think the House would not be inclined to listen to another general Debate after all the Amendments are disposed of.

Mr. COURTNEY said, that in what he had done he had acted only with a desire to facilitate the progress of business. [*Cries of* "No!"] Some hon. Members said "No," which was rather an improper observation to make. He had submitted considerations which had not been submitted to the House before, and which he thought might have been of some assistance in the further development of this problem. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not hear the whole of his speech. He was fetched in apparently because an inconvenient argument was being submitted. He was told that the Amendment of his hon. Friend, which embodied the principles he had laid down, was out of Order, but he hoped that what he had said had not been altogether unfruitful, and might have some influence upon the subsequent development of the Debate.

Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): May I ask, Mr. Speaker, is my Amendment out of Order?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Yes. The next Amendment in Order is, as I have said, that which stands in the name of the noble Lord the Member for Edinburgh.

***Viscount WOLMER** (Edinburgh, W.) rose to move, in line 4, after the word "Bills," to insert—

> "relating to Law and Courts of Justice and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, and Manufactures, and."

These subjects were the subjects dealt with by the present Grand Committees, but if it met with the approval of the House, he was prepared to add "agriculture and fishing." They had endeavoured, in the course of these discussions, to ascertain what the real intentions of the Government were as to the use they would make of the Grand Committee after it was appointed. Did the Government intend to use the Committee merely for the development and progress of reasonably uncontested business, or did they mean to use it as an instrument for forcing through the House Party measures which, without the Committee, they would not have an opportunity of seeing passed into law? The speeches of the supporters of the Resolution showed that the Government had not made up their minds on this point. Running through the speeches of Ministers and their supporters, there was the individual idea of each speaker as to what, in his particular opinion, was the best use to make of this Grand Committee. It was plain that the Government had not made up their minds what they would do when the Committee was formed. Even Ministers contradicted each other, and the Minister in charge of the Resolution contradicted himself. At the beginning of his introductory speech, the

Secretary for Scotland laid down this proposition—

> "We do not regard this as a partisan measure, but as a practical and business-like measure for getting more time for the business of the House."

Later on in his speech the right hon. Gentleman pictured this as the paradise of the Scottish Members, every Bill, not only every Government Bill, but every Bill brought in by the Scottish private Members, was to go before the Committee, and even if Scottish Members passed a Resolution on a Friday evening, the Government was to embody it in a Bill and pass it by means of the Grand Committee. Herein the right hon. Gentleman flatly contradicted himself. Again, the right Gentleman's speech was totally inconsistent with the speech of the Solicitor General for Scotland and with the speech of the Secretary for War. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that the value of this reform would be that it would relieve the Government of the whole of Scotch business; but the Secretary for War said that the Local Government Bill would be the only Bill that the Grand Committee could deal with this Session, because that Bill consisted of no fewer than 70 clauses, and would consequently occupy all the time of the Grand Committee. Then the argument of the Secretary for Scotland, that this reform would form part of Parliamentary procedure for all time, was answered by the Solicitor General for Scotland, who said that it would only be a Sessional Order. There had been the same inconsistency in the speeches of other supporters of the Resolution, and it was plain that they had not made up their minds as to what it was they wanted or as to what would be the work done by the Committee. Anyone who had heard the able speech of the hon. Member for Aberdeen could not deny that the general gist of the contention of the hon. Member was that the measures sent to the Grand Committee would be non-contentious.

*MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I said such Bills as the late Government sent to Scotch Committees. The late Government not only sent to Scotch Committees non-contentious Bills but at least one Bill—the Private Bill Procedure Bill—which was so contentious that when it came back to this House it was defeated.

VISCOUNT WOLMER said, it was true his hon. and learned Friend did not pledge himself that no contentious measures would be sent; but he contended that, as a rule, non-contentious Bills would be sent to the Grand Committee. But the Secretary for War took an entirely different view. The right hon. Gentleman said that such Bills as the Local Veto Bill would be sent to the Committee. Whatever might be the merits or demerits of that Bill nobody would say that it was a non-contentious measure. He would also point out that the Solicitor General for Scotland said it was absolutely necessary to have such a Grand Committee, not because non-contentious Bills might be passed, but because it was impossible to familiarise English minds with Scotch matters. He should say that he thought his hon. and learned Friend was guilty of an act of extraordinary presumption in making such a statement. Why, his hon. and learned Friend had given vote after vote, during the consideration of the Parish Councils Bill, on details of English rural life about which he knew absolutely nothing. His hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries, alluding to the proposal of the Government as alternative to Scottish Home Rule, said if the Committee was granted they might carry through Bills relating to the land, liquor, the Church, and registration. He defied anyone to find four more controversial topics than these. Again, one of his own colleagues, the hon. Member for South Edinburgh, declared that the Bills to be sent to the Grand Committee would be non-contentious. But of all the remarkable utterances on this Resolution that which most deserved attention was the speech of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow. On the 5th of April the hon Member said that such a scheme as that proposed by the Government would be unworkable when a Conservative Government was in power, and that no one would think of asking for such a Committee under those circumstances. Would the House believe that the hon. Member himself voted for the appointment of such a Committee under the late Conservative Government when a Resolution in favour of it was moved by the late Sir George Campbell in March, 1888. In fact, not one of the supporters of the Resolution had made up his mind as to what kind of Bills should be sent to the Grand Committee. The Amendment which he now moved was intended distinctly to define that the work done by the Committee was to be non-contentious. He had taken the words from the Standing Order, but it would be necessary to add "agriculture and fishing," which were inserted in the Standing Order some years after it was first formulated. He asked the House to accept the Amendment for two main reasons. Unless some such Amendment were accepted an unfair advantage would be given to the majority of Scottish Members over the majority of English and Irish Members, and the Government would have an unfair advantage in having a tribunal to which they could send their partisan measures, and where they would command a majority to which they were not entitled by the composition of the House. There was only one argument which the Government could advance against his proposal. It was that by the terms of his Amendment the Scottish Local Government Bill could not be referred to such a Committee. If the Government intended to meet the suggestion of the Opposition they could alter the words of the Amendment so as to include that Bill, but it did not become a Government whose Leader had boasted that he had passed a Parish Councils Bill for England by the votes of Irish and Scottish Members to put forward an identical Bill for Scotland as the best test of legislation to be referred to the proposed Grand Committee. He had the high authority of the late Prime Minister for saying that no contentious measures should be referred to those Grand Committees. He contended that the utterances of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian upon the subject proved conclusively that it was never intended that these Standing Committees should deal with matters other than those of a non-controversial character. He could only conceive of one argument that would weigh in favour of a Grand Committee to which Party measures could be referred—that was what the hon. Member for Aberdeen had called the incubus of an English majority. He thought the hon. Gentleman described it as the "thraldom" under which Scotland suffered. If hon. Members for Scotland

really thought that Scotland was under disabilities, not only with regard to non-contentious but to contentious business also, such as were not imposed upon England, he could quite understand their desire for a Grand Committee of the wide scope proposed. But their grievance was purely imaginary. He was strictly accurate in saying that never was there a view so entirely unfounded in historical fact as that Scotland suffered under special disabilities that England did not suffer under, and that, therefore, a special remedy was required in her case. Between the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1885 only three times was a Conservative Government in power. Almost all the rest of that time, during which the whole political and social structure of England was transformed, there was either an actual Conservative majority in England, or there was a Liberal majority so small that if left to itself the legislation would have been of an entirely different character, while owing to Scotch and Irish votes a Liberal Government was in power in entire sympathy with Scotch aspirations; and all that time England had been coerced into legislation by Scotch and Irish and Welsh votes. The supposed grievance of hon. Members for Scotland, therefore, was a mere figment of their imagination, and he appealed to the House to consider his Amendment, and to see whether the real solution of the problem put before them was not that this Committee should be entrusted with only non-contentious measures. He moved his Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in line 4, after the word "Bills," to insert the words—

> "Relating to Law and Courts of Justice and Legal Procedure, and to Trade, Shipping, Manufactures, Agriculture, and Fishing, and."—(*Viscount Wolmer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The noble Lord has made a very reasonable speech in support of his Amendment, and he has demanded what is the view of the Government with reference to the questions which should occupy a Committee of this character. That is a very proper question if he is willing to accept an answer. The Government have tried several times to give an answer to it. The noble Lord said this was a case of pull devil, pull baker. I do not know whether, in adding my mite, I shall be ranked with the devil or the baker, but I shall endeavour to state what my view of the question is. Now, in the discussion which has gone by, I do not know that there is any great difference of opinion on the subject. Some gentlemen, no doubt, seem to suggest that it is intended to make a great Constitutional change which will alter the whole Forms of the House of Commons and the conduct of business, and materially change the constitution of Parliament. I have no doubt they sincerely believe that view. We have always stated that that was not our view at all. It was not on that ground that we made this proposal, and we have never contemplated any such change of the sort. No good can proceed from carrying on counter-assertions of that character. Those who believe we propose a great Constitutional change will remain of the same opinion still, and those who say that we merely aim at relieving the House of a great deal of business will also retain their opinion and declare that that is our object. It is our object; and when the noble Lord asks me as to great Party questions —Land Acts, Church Disestablishment, and questions of that kind, which I may call of a high political and controversial character—whether they are proper subjects for a Committee of this character, I do not know if he will accept any statement of mine; but I have to tell him that that is not the object of a Committee of this character. The noble Lord speaks of non-controversial questions. In these days it is very difficult to say that any question is a non-controversial one. I do not know that the Scotch are less disposed to controversy than other people. When I practised at the Parliamentary Bar a Scotch Bill always meant a good fight, for I was told they never compromised on any terms. I consider there are few Scotch questions which cannot be called controversial, and, therefore, I cannot quite understand the noble Lord's definition of "non-controversial." There are questions which are non-controversial in a different sense, and I think the Local Government Bill is a good illustration. Again, I do not think that the question of education is controversial in Scotland in the sense in which it is controversial in England, and barring the question of Disestablishment the religious question is not controversial in Scotland as it is in this country. It should be remembered that a great deal of the time of the Committee would be occupied with details of which the Scotch Members are by far the best judges, and which, if discussed in this House, would not only waste a great deal of our time, but, I fear, exhaust our patience. If you can refer a Bill of this kind to a Committee where there is a predominant Scotch element, I do not see what harm you do to the Constitution of Parliament or what you can do better. We have endeavoured to set up the best possible tribunal. There is no man more averse than I am to breaking up the unity of Parliament in dealing with great questions affecting every part of the United Kingdom. I have no disposition to—and I never would be a party to—the breaking up of the control of the House of Commons as a whole over great questions which interest the whole country. To use any instrument of this kind merely for the purpose of securing the predominance of a Party majority would be, in my opinion, an abuse altogether of a provision which is intended to relieve the House of Commons from a burden, and to relieve it in a manner which may be satisfactory to those parts of the United Kingdom to which these measures more particularly apply. I do not know whether I have succeeded in explaining my views on this subject. This proposal does not involve any Constitutional change. It will be essentially an experimental plan. If it succeeds, well and good; if it fails, no serious harm will be done. I am free to admit that the main object of the Government is to refer to this Committee the Scotch Local Government Bill, which, if considered in the House, owing to the great number of details that would require careful attention, would occupy an unconscionable part of the time of the Session. The authority of the House can be exercised on Report, and we shall escape the discussion of extremely numerous details on the floor of the House. There are also many Bills in the same category, not being high Party and political measures, in which the Committee would be most usefully employed. I have heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian quoted as an authority against this proposal. But it is not fair to quote my right hon. Friend as being opposed to this project. I have no doubt he would be opposed to the proposal, if he believed that it involved a change in the Constitutional practice of Imperial Parliament. In recent times my right hon. Friend has expressed distinct opinions in favour of a proposal of this character—notably to a deputation of the Scotch Members. I can assure the House that the Government do not entertain the sinister objects attached to the proposals by hon. Members opposite. I believe the Committee could be largely used in the consideration of measures of what I may call a hybrid character — not absolutely non-controversial measures, but measures which are not of a high political character. I hope now that I have answered the question of the noble Lord he will not believe that we are actuated by sinister motives. These are not the objects we have endeavoured to obtain, and I am sure we should not have been supported by the majority which voted for us the other night upon the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition if the House had believed we entertained any such ideas. I regard that vote as maintaining the position of the Government as against the position of the Opposition. The Opposition believe that this proposal involves a great Constitutional change, while the majority of the House affirm the view of the Government that it is an expedient brought forward for the purpose of facilitating the business of the House. That is the view which I hope the House will take to-day, and I trust that, in the circumstances, we may at least be allowed to try the experiment under the Sessional Order proposed.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The Chancellor of the Exchequer paid a compliment to the noble Lord for the moderation of his speech, and acknowledged the reasonableness of the request which he made for the views of the Government upon this subject. I am bound to admit that the answer which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given us is a much clearer statement than any we have had before in any of the speeches which have been made in the House on the matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, complains that it is of very little use for the Government to say anything on the subject, because even after they have stated their views we shall remain dissatisfied, and appear to think that we have not got at the bottom of the matter. But surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows, or would have known if he had been in the House, that the whole difficulty has arisen because the Government have not always stated their case in the same way as the right hon. Gentleman has just stated it to us now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in the House on the evening when the matter was first opened by the Secretary for Scotland. I wonder, as the right hon. Gentleman did not hear that speech delivered, whether he has since thought it worth while to read the report of it? The right hon. Gentleman laid the greatest possible stress upon the advantages which this Committee would afford in dealing with all sorts of questions. The Secretary for Scotland in his speech did not confine himself to matters that could by any possibility be called non-controversial. There was one part of his speech in which he appealed to private Members below the Gangway, and said that if they had this Committee set up it would be a means by which every kind of Bill could be brought to a completion, and he went beyond that, because he said that when a Resolution was passed in the House it would be the duty of the Government to bring in a Bill giving effect to it, and to send, with as little delay as possible, that Bill into Committee. That was absolutely the reverse of what has just been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Surely the right hon. Member has misunderstood me. Private Members may very possibly introduce Bills that are non-controversial or only partially controversial. If an hon. Member introduced a Bill of a highly controversial or political character it would not be sent to the Committee.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That is a "gloss" given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the speech of the Secretary for Scotland that the right hon. Gentleman did not hear. That would be very well if it had been what the Secretary for Scotland said. In fact, it was not what the Secretary for Scotland did say when introducing the Motion. What he said was in effect this—"There you will have a special body constituted to facilitate the transaction of special business, which he ventured to say would in five years pass all those private Scotch Bills which were best worth passing. Well, would the Chancellor of the Exchequer get up and say in the face of the Scotch Members in the House that the Scotch Bills that were best worth passing were those which were absolutely non-contentious? The whole speech of the Secretary for Scotland was intended to refer to the Resolution brought forward by a Scotch Member the next night, and carried with the consent and vote of the Party. I am perfectly ready to recognise that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a superior authority to that of the Secretary for Scotland. Nor will I presume to question the statements now made by him. They are authoritative. He has thrown over the unfortunate Secretary for Scotland. But, never mind, he is used to that. I will take the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the authoritative declaration of the intention of the Government. What does he say? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in effect, says that so far as we are concerned we mean that this Committee shall deal only with non-controversial Bills.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No; I did not say that——

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to finish my sentence. I understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say on behalf of the Government that it was their intention that this Committee should be used only for non-contentious Bills and non-Party measures; but he went on to say that in his opinion it would be a very difficult thing at times to define accurately what was a non-controversial matter. Perhaps, however, I have misrepresented the statement of the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I never said that what I intended was that non-controversial measures only should be referred to the Committee. What I did say was that the Committee would not deal with great Party political questions like the Disestablishment of the Church or Home Rule for Scotland. It is unfair to suppose that the Secretary for Scotland meant that the Committee should deal with matters of that kind.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think the House, after that statement, will agree with me that it is absolutely necessary for us to ask for some definition of the kind of measures that are to be referred to this Committee. Because what is the state of the case? In answer to my noble Friend, who had given us as illustrations of controversial measures Bills relating to liquor, land, Church, and registration, the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, "Certainly not; we don't intend to send Bills of that kind to the Committee." Therefore, these Bills, in the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, come within the range of controversial Bills which are not to be referred to the Committee. But the Secretary of State for War distinctly included liquor as one of the subjects that should be referred to the Committee. I fear, however, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in the House when that statement was made by his colleague.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am constantly being reproached for not having been present in the House on certain occasions. I hope the House will accept my excuse that my absence has been in consequence of the great physical labour that has recently been thrown upon me. I have done my best services in the House, and if the House is not satisfied it is because I am not equal either physically or intellectually to the great strain I have had lately to undergo. I therefore ask to be no longer subjected to this kind of reproach.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I at once say that I recognise the force of that explanation, and I will not refer to the matter again; but it is a fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer took up the statement of my noble Friend who had given these four subjects as illustrations of controversial subjects, and they were the land, registration, the liquor, and the Church; and in answer to that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the subjects referred to by my noble Friend were non-controversial.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not. I referred to two subjects, but I did not refer to liquor and to registration. I must beg that if I am to be quoted I should, at least, be quoted accurately.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct in saying that he referred to two subjects definitely and by name; but I say that I am in the recollection of the House when I again repeat, in reply to my noble Friend, he said the subjects to which my noble Friend referred were not subjects within the scope of controversial matter.

Sir W. HARCOURT: That is not so.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am afraid, then, that the recollection of one of us is in error, and we can only check the accuracy of the statement by a reference to *Hansard* when the report is published. I am satisfied whichever way it is. I only want to get at the facts; and now I am to take it that liquor is to be included. Very well, does the right hon. Gentleman mean the House to understand that such a subject as the dealing with the traffic in intoxicating liquors is not a great Party and political question as well as the revenue also? Does he mean to say that a question of that kind is to be treated as a non-controversial or, at all events, not an important Party question which may be safely committed to a Committee which has previously been packed in the interests of the Government? I say that is a monstrous proposition. There are two other subjects which the right hon. Gentleman describes as being non-controversial and suitable for reference to this Committee. One is local government, and he says that in Scotland local government is not in the sense in which we have been using the word a contentious or a controversial subject. I cannot dispute that statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and, if it be true, I should say by all means include local government as one of the questions which you may properly refer to the Committee and add to the list of subjects which has been already suggested by my noble Friend. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes the question of education, and he says that the question of education is not controversial in Scotland.

Mr. BEITH (Inverness, &c.): Hear, hear!

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I see my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness confirms that statement. Let me say to him, does he not consider that the demand for denominational education by the Roman Catholics in Scotland is a highly contentious subject?

Mr. BEITH: No.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I should like to ask a Roman Catholic what he thought. I confess I do not know in England of any subject which is more hotly contested than those questions concerning education which arise out of different religious opinions of Protestants on the one hand and Roman Catholics on the other.

Mr. BEITH: We never hear of that in Scotland.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I can only say that strangers who go to Scotland hear a good deal of it. Now what have we got? The three questions of liquor, local government, and education, of which I venture to say two, at any rate, are highly contentious, and the matter is left in such doubt that I defy anyone to say whether any other subject you can take, except the two specially excluded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, might not equally on similar arguments be referred to this Committee. When the question of Grand Committees was first brought before the House, I know well that it was the desire of the right hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Gladstone) so strictly to define the subjects which were to be committed to them that by no possibility could they be described hereafter as contentious subjects; and for the very good reason that my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian knew perfectly well that the whole advantage of these Committees would be lost if you sent contentious subjects to such a tribunal, and the whole of the experience of the Committees since that time has justified his opinion. Whenever a really contentious question has been sent to a Grand Committee no useful purpose has been served. I should have thought, as a mere matter of business, that it was common-sense business so to define the issues to be submitted to this Committee that we may be certain at all events that those subjects which arise out of controversial difficulties will not interfere to prevent the success of the experiment. My noble Friend has adopted the exact language that was used with regard to the Grand Committees. If that is not wide enough, if the circumstances of Scotland differ so much from the circumstances of the United Kingdom, or from England, that more subjects may safely be included in the non-controversial list, I do not see any objection to an addition being made to the Amendment of my noble Friend in order to include them; but I do say that the very diverse statements we have had from Ministers of the Crown in regard to their own intentions, and after the experience we have had of the Grand Committees, it is most foolish to go on with this proposal without endeavouring, at any rate, to define the subjects which shall be submitted to it.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): In a few sentences I will reply to what the right hon. Gentleman has said about me, except the personalities—personalities which I think hon. Gentlemen opposite even will allow I never initiate, and which, from whichever side they come, I always cordially detest. The right hon. Gentleman says that I gave a much larger scope in my opening speech to the operations of this proposed Committee than was given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but most fortunately the right hon. Gentleman had placed in his hands the exact words I used — words that perhaps sounded better in his mouth than in mine a week ago; still, words which, when I heard them read, impressed me with the idea that I placed the case before the House in a very specific, very definite, very innocent, and not unpersuasive manner. I stand by every word of the passage. In that passage, and throughout my speech, there can be found absolutely not one single sentence implying that any Franchise Bill, or any Church Bill, or any Bill raising contentious subjects of a serious nature was, in the intention of the Government, to be placed before that Grand Committee. We ask that Committee this year for the purpose of laying before it the Local Government Board Bill for Scotland, a Bill of 70 clauses, which, if placed before a Committee of the whole House, would enter into competition with all other business. We have the experience of the 42 days spent over the English Parish Councils Bill in Committee, and that is the practical argument with which we come to the House to ask them to enable us to put the Scotch Local Government Bill before a body that will not pass it in time not taken from the general usage of the House, but a body which will thoroughly understand it, and take the greatest interest in it. The real answer to all the objections made by the right hon. Gentleman and the noble Lord is to be found in the words of the Resolution itself. In the Resolution I find these words—

> "All Bills relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by Order of the House, be committed to them."

We have had a good specimen to-day of the sort of Debate that would take place if a Church Bill, or a Franchise Bill, or a Redistribution Bill, was proposed to be laid before a Grand Committee, and I must say the ability and the experience in speaking of the hon. Gentlemen who have addressed us already, and those very able men who sit beside them, would make it certain that no Government, unless composed of nothing short of lunatics, would propose to bring any contentious Bill before the Grand Committee. I say nothing as to the First Reading stage, for I do not want to take an unfair advantage; but in the case of a Second Reading no Bill which was objected to by a large minority of the House would ever be referred to that Committee. And when a Bill has gone through the Committee it would not then be decided and finally done with, but would come back to be examined on Report, and the House would have to the full the power which had never left it, and it must be remembered the advantage we propose to get by this Committee is not to override the opinion of the House with Scotch opinion, but to let the House know, before it finally makes up its mind, authoritatively what Scotch opinion is. That is the practical, most laudable, and desirable object with which this Committee has been proposed. My right hon. Friend said truly this was to be an experiment. My belief is, if it is fairly tried—and I am sure from what I know of many of the opponents of mine there are among them many who would gladly try it—it would meet with such favour in the future that the prophecies read by the right hon. Gentleman, that in five years we should clear off the arrears of Scotch business, would have proved to be true. But this year we propose to make the experiment with the Scotch Local Government Bill, and I earnestly trust that hon. Gentlemen, instead of prolonging this Debate unduly, will enable me to present to the House that Local Government Bill and show them what a very fit Bill it is to present to a Scotch Grand Committee upstairs for their opinion.

Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR** (Manchester, E.): I would not for the world shake the good opinion which the right hon. Gentleman has formed of his own previous speech, after hearing it read by my right hon. Friend; but I think he must, on reflection, admit that his original words, however well chosen they may have been for the purpose of encouraging his own friends to support his proposals, were not well calculated to allay the anxiety of his political opponents. He has now told us, and absolutely told us for the first time, that the Government mean to refer nothing whatever to this Committee during its continuance, for it is only a Sessional Order—nothing except the Scottish Local Government Bill.

Sir G. **TREVELYAN**: I said that the experiment would be tried on the Scottish Local Government Bill, and I consider that I made an absolute promise that no controversial measures should be referred to the Grand Committee this Session. That promise I abide by, but I did not go further.

Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR**: I accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement at once. If that be the modest proposal of the Government, I think the right hon. Gentleman must have felt that a good deal of eloquent rhetoric with which he pleased our ears on Monday week was really thrown away; and when he held out to his Scotch friends that their Resolutions and their Bills were all going to be dealt with by the help of this Committee, he at all events said something calculated to lead to a false impression of the intentions of the Government. But I pass from what he has said to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said, and I can assure him the last thing I desire to do is to add to the burden, the anxieties and the difficulties which I perfectly well know anyone who is at the same time the Leader of the House and Chancellor of the Exchequer, during the preparation of a difficult Budget must have on his shoulders. I have had sufficient practical experience of how hard it is to carry on difficult Parliamentary and administrative work at the same time not to feel the difficulties of the right hon. Gentleman, but he must allow us to make an appeal to him in this matter. He has given assurances which, broadly speaking, are certainly not of an unsatisfactory character, with regard to the class of measures that are to be sent to this Committee. What we ask is that the substance of those assurances should be embodied in the Resolution. It is not that we doubt the good faith of the right hon. Gentleman, or that we doubt the protestations of the Secretary for Scotland, but after all we are, and the Government admit we are, creating a precedent. The precedent will remain in the form of this Resolution in the body of the Standing Orders of the House, while the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman which qualify the terms of that Resolution will not be there and will have to be hunted up out of the pages of *Hansard*, and hon. Members in the future will have to go through the labour of collating the speeches of the various Ministers responsible for the Resolution, and of trying to introduce into them something like harmony, and to extract from them something in the nature of a unanimous verdict. But I may point out that we are bound to look at this proposal with suspicion, not for the use to be made of it this year, but for the use it may be put to in subsequent years, because though I do not mean to raise the question of the unfair constitution of the Committee—that must come up again in the course of the Amendments that will be moved—hon. Gentlemen opposite must do us the justice to say that no answer has been made to our contention that the Government of the day will secure by means of this Resolution a stage of a Bill to be passed through a Committee which is entirely favourable to their own opinion. That is the fact; it is a question of arithmetic; that is what they have done, and it cannot be denied. It may be an innocent proposal for the Bill of this year, guarded by the statements made by existing Ministers from any undue abuse, but those declarations will pass and be forgotten, lost in the interminable region of Debates in this

House; and if we are to secure the future against abuse of this most dangerous principle, it can only be by introducing into the body of the proposal words that will indicate what class of Bills shall be referred to the Committee. I do not wholly desire to force the words of my hon. Friend down the throats of the Government; he very wisely based himself on the precedent of the Standing Committee, but I would ask, if they will not have these words, that they should have some regard to our just susceptibilities and contrive to show what are their real intentions. I trust the Chancellor of the Exchequer will do something to carry out the honourable intentions of the Government.

Sir W. HARCOURT: If I thought it were possible to frame a definition on this subject I would gladly insert such a definition. I do not think it is possible to frame a definition on the subject that would meet the right hon. Gentleman's object. The matter must rest upon the general feeling of the House as to what are and what are not matters fit to be included. Therefore, with every desire to meet the wishes of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I cannot honestly say that I could frame a definition such as the right hon. Gentleman wishes me to do. No one denies that the Scotch Local Government Bill is a fit Bill to be referred to this Committee, and we can at all events try the experiment with that Bill. If we find the system work well, then when we make the same proposal next Session we may, if we find it possible to do so, draw up a definition of the character of the Bills that are to be referred to the Grand Committee. At present, however, it would be a mere waste of time to attempt to draw up such a definition, and to spend hours and days of most valuable time at this period of the Session in discussing it.

*Mr. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrews, &c.) said, the right hon. Gentleman was most persuasive, but there was a method which did not seem to have occurred to the right hon. Gentleman that would exactly meet the case. The Government had this afternoon admitted it was their intention only to refer the Local Government Bill to a Committee such as was described in the Resolution. It only remained for the Government to get the Second Reading of the Local Government Bill for Scotland, and the whole matter would become a simple one; therefore, after the declarations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary for Scotland, he could not see what was the necessity of proceeding with this Resolution at all, because they had been told its scope was to be so limited in its functions, so circumscribed, that during the present Session it was perfectly certain that no other Bill than the Local Government Bill would be referred to it. Why, therefore, should they establish a precedent on which the Government themselves did not appear to be at one, and why not adopt the simpler course of referring the Local Government Bill to a special Committee? All the arguments that had been addressed to the House against the Amendment of his noble Friend appeared to him to have told in its favour. And there were one or two other considerations which he thought should have weight with the House, and, at any rate, with the Scottish Members, before they agreed to the Resolution in its unlimited scope and before they rejected the Amendment of his noble Friend. What were the duties cast upon the Scottish Members during the last Session of Parliament? He apprehended that if this Committee became an established fact, and a Local Government Bill was read a second time, they would be called upon to sit upstairs at least two days every week, besides carrying on their other duties as Members of this House. To those Members who were in the habit of going away very often from 7 till 10 or 11 o'clock that might not seem so very irksome, but to many Members who stayed there throughout the whole Sitting, three nights a week on Government business, besides Morning Sittings, and now that the suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule was becoming common, from 3 o'clock until 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, it would become intolerable to serve on such a Committee. Perhaps hon. Members were not aware what the services of Scottish Members were on other Committees. Last Session there were appointed 31 Select Committees, and the total number of Members serving on those was 344. Out of those he found that 87 were Scottish Members serving, 18 on one Committee, 11 on two Committees each, nine on three Committees each, and five on four Committees each, making an aggregate of service for one Committee alone of 87, and if they took the very low average of five attendances per Committee it worked out among the Scottish Members that they attended some 600 meetings during last Session. Besides that, there were the Standing Committees, and they had not yet been told, nor did he see any action was being taken by the Committee of Selection by which they were to be altogether prohibited from serving upon the Grand Committees on Law and Trade. On the Standing Committees, during the last Session, there were altogether appointed 74 Members on the Committee on Law, and 30 added for four special Bills, out of whom 18 were Scottish Members. On the Standing Committee on Trade there were altogether appointed 76 Members, and 41 added for special Bills, of whom 14 were Scottish Members, so that they had altogether 32 Scottish Members serving last Session on Grand Committees, and 87 on Select Committees, not to speak of the work of Private Bill Committees, Royal Commissions, and other semi-Parliamentary duties. He thought those hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies who supported the Government ought to consider for a moment, before they agreed to press on those who were in a minority in this matter, a task that would become most irksome and almost intolerable. There was one other point to which he wished to refer, which was brought to his mind by the speech of the Secretary for Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman said that he adhered to every word of the speech in which he originally introduced this proposal—not on Monday week but Monday fortnight, nearly three weeks ago. They were told by the right hon. Gentleman that his proposal, about which the right hon. Gentleman had a great deal to say, would enable the House in five years to do a great number of things. Since then, on the authority of the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Shaw), speaking on behalf of the Government, the House had been informed that this was only to be a Sessional Order. If the Motion was only to be applied to the Scotch Local Government Bill, he submitted that it was not worth while to lay down a precedent on which hon. Members were far from being agreed, or to proceed with a Resolution which would have no practical advantage.

MR. BUCHANAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 236; Noes 208.—(Division List, No. 30.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The House divided:—Ayes 208; Noes 245.—(Division List, No. 31.)

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton) moved an Amendment limiting the number of Bills to be sent to this Grand Committee. His Amendment proposed to limit them to Bills introduced by a Minister of the Crown. He pointed out that there was only a limited number of Scotch Members in the House, and a proportion of them sat on each of the present Standing Committees, and now a third Committee was to be set up upon which, as his hon. Friend the Member for St. Andrews had reminded the House, all the Scotch Members were expected to serve. That being so, there ought to be some limitation to the source from which the Bills sent to the Committee came, for he believed that what the Scotch Members were asked to undertake exceeded a fair estimate of their powers. This would be a useful procedure, but there was a danger of overloading; and it seemed to him that, if no limit were placed upon the Bills which could be referred to the Committee, it would act as a stimulus to the introduction of a number of Private Bills. He wished to protect Scotch Members against any such result, especially after what had been said by the Secretary for Scotland, who seemed to encourage Scotch Members below the Gangway in the belief that their measures would be taken up and accelerated by this new procedure—measures which would wither and die in the less suitable region in the House. If this Resolution meant anything — if the Government meant business they would best show their intention by acceding to this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in line 4, to insert, after the word "Bills," the words "introduced by a Minister of the Crown."—(*Sir H. Maxwell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not entertain the fear expressed by the hon. Member that the Private Bills of hon. Members will monopolise the whole time of the Committee. I do not think that this Committee will be able to find time this Session for a great deal more than the Government business sent to them; but, if there should be time, why should not the useful measures which are very often brought forward by private Members be dealt with? I have a great belief in the staying powers of Scotch Members, and I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to press his Amendment.

***Mr. LEES KNOWLES** (Salford, W.) said, he had himself intended to bring forward this subject, but he had not yet had the opportunity. He believed it would be absolutely futile to refer private Members' Bills to this Standing Committee unless there were some understanding that the Ministers who represented the particular Departments which had cognizance of the Bills should attend the Committee and give their advice and assistance. He would illustrate what he meant by the fate of the Plumbers' Registration Bill last Session. That Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Trade, and the first sitting was adjourned in order that a Minister connected with the Local Government Board might attend and give Departmental help. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board was added to the Committee, but being engaged on Departmental business he could not attend the second sitting of the Committee. The result was that the Committee were obliged to report the Bill to the House, being unable to put it into shape without the advice and assistance of the Local Government Board. Why could not the Scottish private Members' Bills be sent to the present Standing Committees? Last year the Standing Committee on Law sat only 14 times, and the Standing Committee on Trade only 6. If it were necessary, therefore, to send more private Members' Bills to a Standing Committee, why should they not be sent to the existing Standing Committees? Every Bill which came before the Committee on Law last year was dropped, and only two Bills were passed by the Committee on Trade. Unless there were some arrangement with the Government by which Ministers should give Departmental advice and assistance in regard to private Members' Bills coming before the Standing Committees, it would be futile to send Private Bills before them, especially if the private Member in charge of the Bill happened to belong to the Opposition. The particular Minister whose Department was affected should watch each Bill. Knowing the immense amount of work Ministers were called upon to perform in their various Departments, he could not complain of their not attending Standing Committees, and he recognised the great addition which would be made to the labours, especially of Ministers for Scotland, if they, in addition, were called upon to attend a Scottish Standing Committee.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he had listened with great interest to the remarks of his hon. Friends on that side of the House, and he thought there was great force in them. He agreed that it would be very undesirable and not at all wise for these Standing Committees to proceed without the advice of a Minister. He would suggest another point for the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This Amendment was unimportant from the point of view that the Scotch Members had not been at all fortunate in the ballot, and that they had very little chance of getting any Bill carried beyond a Second Reading. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it was wise, under these circumstances, to resist this Amendment? Scotch Members were rightly on two Standing Committees already, and it would be a misfortune if they were removed. If the third Standing Committee were appointed, and if this Committee were to deal with private Members' Bills, the efficiency of Scotch Members as Members of the Imperial Parliament would be seriously impaired. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would be saving time in making the concession sought by this Amendment. The House could hardly pass the Resolution as it stood, because the objection on grounds of precedent was very great. No one, surely, could dream that Scotch Members, as regarded Private Bills, were to be placed in a better position than English, Irish, or Welsh Members; and if this novel proposition were yielded to Parliament must surely consider whether separate Standing Committees should not be appointed for the Private Bills of English, Irish, and Welsh Members also. Scotch Members could hardly expect they would be given a preference in that respect. There would be a risk in private Members' Bills being referred to a Standing Committee where there could be no such control over them as existed in Committee of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not gain anything by refusing this concession, while he would by accepting the Amendment leave open a very important question for future discussion when the time came for it to be considered all over again. It was admitted that the question would have to be dealt with again next Session—supposing Her Majesty's advisers occupied the same seats then as now—and they should not now establish a precedent for which there was no necessity at all. Hon. Members on that side of the House were not objecting from any anticipation of Scotch measures being referred to this Committee during the present Session, but on the ground that special privileges, however innocent, practically should not be granted to Members of one nationality as a precedent for others.

Sir W. HARCOURT: As the chief matter here is time, I do not wish to insist upon any point which will protract discussion unnecessarily. My view is—and I hope it will ultimately prevail—that private Members' Bills should not be excluded from this Grand Committee. But, considering how late we are in the Session, considering also what big work the Local Government Bill and, perhaps, also the Fatal Accidents Bill will provide for the Committee and how much of its time those measures will occupy this Session, I will not resist the Amendment of the hon. Member.

*Sir C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) said, the argument brought forward all along against this Committee had been that it was a great Constitutional innovation. But no limitation existed with regard to private Members' Bills going before other Grand Committees. And any Bills could go before them, just as they would have gone before the proposed Scotch Committee, only on an express order from the House. He was sorry to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer make this concession. What were the facts? When a Bill was once introduced it was no longer the property of a private Member, but the property of the House. He had heard no argument which, in his opinion, justified the alteration of the original proposal placed upon the Paper by the Government.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) said, his hon. Friend had already pointed out that there was no need for this Amendment, because all that was wanted could be obtained without the measure. His Amendment, had it been adopted by the House, would have given private Members a place; but if the Resolution were limited in this way, no private Member would have the opportunity of taking his Bill before the Committee at all. As the Amendment stood it would prevent any private Members' Bill being referred to the Committee. He was willing to come to a compromise in order to get the Bill through at this sitting, and with that view he would not press the Amendment he had on the Paper if this present Amendment were rejected and things allowed to remain as they were for the present Session. Practically, no opposed private Members' Bill could come before this Committee during the present Session, because all the Wednesdays were occupied; and even if this were not so, the remaining Wednesdays would have been of no value to private Members, because it was only after half-past 5 o'clock that they could take a Division, and then, when a Bill had successfully passed the Second Reading, any one Member of the House could prevent it going to the Committee this Session.

Sir M. STEWART hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Caithness. He could well sympathise with the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow, who was anxious that a Bill connected with the Church of Scotland should have been sent to, and at once disposed of by, this Committee, but by the adoption of the Amendment the Committee, it was to be hoped, would not be so ductile as it might otherwise have been.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. LITTLE (Whitehaven) moved, in line 8, to leave out the word "fifteen," and insert the word "thirty-one." This, he said, was an experiment which might be extended in future to Wales and Ireland, and the object of the Amendment was to level up each of these three possible Committees that might be formed to the present position of England, when a Bill relating to England alone was being considered in Committee of the whole House. There were at present 465 Members sitting for English seats and 205 Members sitting for other seats in the United Kingdom. That proportion was about nine to four, and it was the proportion he would suggest should be adopted when they were appointing this Committee in the case of Ireland. They would then have 103 Irish Members and 45 Members added from other parts of the United Kingdom. When dealing with Wales, for the 30 Welsh Members 13 Members would be added from the other parts of the United Kingdom; and with regard to Scotland they would have added to the 72 Scotch Members 31 from other parts. The adoption of such a course in regard to the Grand Committee would place each of these three countries on an exact level with England. He begged to move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the word "fifteen," and insert the word "thirty-one."—(*Mr. Little.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'fifteen' stand part of the Question."

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Glasgow, Partick) supported the Amendment not exactly for the reasons put forward by the Mover, but for the reasons which he should have stated in his own Amendment had it not been out of Order, and which related to the constitution of the Committee. He hoped to be able, however, to state his point on the present Amendment. He urged that this Standing Committee, when formed, ought to be a reflection of the composition of this House as a whole. That was not obtained by a Committee composed of Scottish Members altogether, with only 15 others added, but it could be obtained to a very considerable extent by a Committee composed of 72 Scotch Members altogether with 31 added to it to be chosen by the Committee of Selection, provided their hands were set free from the rule which guided them in choosing Members to be added to Select Committees, and which was that these added Members should correspond with the composition of the House. But if 15 were to be added eight should be representative of the Government and seven of the Opposition. The Committee of Selection should be empowered to say they should have regard to the qualification of the additional Members selected, but not to the composition of the House. In that way they would be able to choose additional Members so as to go a long way towards bringing the Committee so formed into accord with the composition of the House, and in doing so would be carrying out the principle laid down by the Secretary for War in his speech. The right hon. Gentleman did not look to the 15 to be added by the ordinary rule of selection, and he said that Scotchmen sitting for English constituencies might be added if it were thought they would assist the Committee in its deliberations. In this House they had a great many more Scotchmen sitting for English seats who were Unionists than supporters of the Government, who would be most useful Members of such a Committee. But say a Committee was composed, according to the Amendment now before the House, of 103 Members. In the first place, it would contain the whole body of Scotch Representatives; that was to say, 49 supporters of the Government and 23 of the Opposition. Supposing they added 31—namely, six supporters of the Government, and 25 supporters of the Opposition, then they would bring the Committee up to 55 Representatives of the Government against 48 of the Opposition. That would give the Government a majority of seven, which was just about their proper proportion of a majority. If they did that they would be laying down a rule which would be good for the future as well as for the present, and which would make such a rule possible under any Government. This proposal made the Resolution far more general; it looked beyond the present Session, and it would give fully as true a representation of the opinion of Scotland. He was not at all prepared to assent to the proposition that if they wanted to ascertain the opinion of Scotland on all questions they had simply to look at the votes of Scotch Members in that House. The majority of 8 per cent. gave a majority of 36 per cent. of Representatives in the House, and the argument adduced in favour of this Resolution by supporters of the Government was drawn from the events which had taken place during the passage of the Local Government Bill for Scotland. The Secretary for War, for instance, quoted the way in which Scotch Members had been over-ridden again and again in the House of Commons by the general vote. That was, of course, true; but if they looked to the opinion of Scotland, as expressed by the bodies which knew a great deal more about the interests of Scotland in the local affairs they were discussing on that Bill than the Scotch Representatives who sat in that House, they would find that the County Councils coincided not with the opinion of the Representatives of Scotland, but with the House at large during the last Parliament. This winter there was a convention of Scotch County Councils, at which many of the matters dealt with in the Scotch Local Government Bill were discussed and Resolutions passed upon them. In regard to the control of the police, the voting was 43 to 18 one way in the House of Commons, and it was 22 to 16 the other way in the Convention. In regard to the compulsory acquisition of land, in the House of Commons the voting was 46 to 12 one way, in the Convention it was 25 to 11 in the other way. The only point on which the Convention agreed with the House of Commons was regarding rights of way. The Committee constituted as proposed by the Government did not reflect the House, and it seemed to him no Committee could work satisfactorily unless it was a fair image of the representation of the House. If it were made that he should be perfectly prepared to accept and support the Committee. There was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction in Scotland with the slow progress of Scotch legislation, and he and those who agreed with him should welcome any reasonable scheme, such as a Grand Committee, for dealing with Scotch affairs, but constituted in accordance with the composition of the House.

Sir W. HARCOURT: As I understand the proposal put forward by the hon. Member for the Partick Division, it was that 33 Members were to be taken from one political Party in order to neutralise the other section. Such a proposal as that is one which the Government cannot entertain for a moment. If hon. Members are to be added to the Committee, they must be added on the principle on which Members are selected for other Committees. If hon. Members opposite who so sincerely believe that there is some sinister object in this Committee, and that it is intended that the private Members for Scotland shall carry something prejudicial to the interests of the neighbouring country of England—if their alarm will be dispelled by adding 15 more Members—if they think that 30 Members chosen from the rest of the United Kingdom would be a safeguard against the designs of the Scotch Members—then I confess that I should not find it in my heart to resist this Amendment. What will happen, then? The 70 Scotch Members, or most of them, will generally attend; and the 30 patriotic English Members who are to defend the Empire against the 70 will generally be absent. They will begin to believe that Scotch Members, after all, on such questions as will be referred to the Committee, may be left to take care of their own interests. But, if the Amendment will do anything to settle the question, I shall be glad to settle it on that basis.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made what is intended to be, and is, in fact, a conciliatory offer; and I shall be glad if we can come to an agreement on the basis of his proposition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says it would be absurd that the additional number, whether 15 or 30, should be of one political complexion, and that the addition should be used to redress the political balance upon the Committee. If it be an absurd proposition, there is no doubt it is the one we have to put forward. We do not want merely to increase the number of the Committee—there is no advantage in that; what we want to have this number added for is precisely in order that the political balance may be fairly maintained. I take it that that is the object of the Mover of the Amendment. [Mr. Little was understood to dissent.] If it is not his object it is that of the hon. Member for Partick. It would not be so extravagant, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to suppose, to state on what principle the 15 or 30 added Members ought to be chosen. It is precisely because you have departed from the ordinary practice in the original composition of the Committee that it becomes necessary to adopt a new principle in dealing with the addition of Members. We had an indication of the intentions of the Government in the speech of the Secretary for War; he told us the probability was that the added Members would increase the strength of the Opposition on the Committee, and go far to approach to the disposition of Parties in the House. In these circumstances, while I for one desire to accept the offer made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think it would be necessary to add to the Amendment words providing that the Committee of Selection in adding the 30 shall have regard to the desirability of approximating the balance of Parties on the Committee to that of the whole House.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is a difficult question. Contrary to the intentions of the Mover, the right hon. Gentleman wishes to make use of the Amendment for a purpose which he had not in view. I am still willing to accept the Amendment; but if it is intended to transform assent to it into a proposition which has nothing whatever to do with it, and one entirely alien to the intentions of the Mover, of course I must withdraw any assent to it. As I understand the suggestion of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, he wishes to add to this Amendment a proposition which has been already ruled out of Order as an Amendment in itself. A proposition of that kind is really out of the question. Therefore, I will either agree to the Amendment *simpliciter*, or else, if it is to be understood that this is to be tacked on to it, we shall have no alternative but to vote against it.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: When an Amendment is moved it becomes the property of the House, and the House can modify it if it pleases. The Government themselves have never denied the inequity in the constitution of this Committee; all they say is, we are only going to give them such a class of Bills to deal with that it does not matter how you constitute your Committee in relation to Parties in this House, for no great harm can ensue. I say it is absurd to ask us to modify the traditional method of dividing these additional Members between the two Parties. The whole scheme of the Government consists in reversing the traditional method of appointing Committees, and I want to know how the 15 or the 30 are to be selected when the 72 violate every traditional practice of the House? My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham drew attention to the speech made by the first Cabinet Minister put up to defend this Resolution—the Secretary of State for War. The right hon. Gentleman is reported thus—

> "The Government also propose that 15 other Members should be added by the Committee of Selection, who might choose Scotchmen sitting for English constituencies, and, if they did so, the probability in this instance would be that the large number of 15 would add to the strength of the Opposition on the Committee and go very far to approach to the disposition of Parties in the House."

In the face of that declaration I wish to know why the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who professes such a desire to conciliate the Opposition, to save time by conceding every reasonable demand, throws over his own colleague, abandons the principles laid down by that colleague, and dissipates the hopes raised by that colleague? That is not the way to treat the House of Commons. Most certainly, if the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman be rejected, I shall endeavour at a later stage to move that the principle stated by the Secretary of State for War shall be embodied in the proposition, and that the Committee of Selection shall receive instructions with regard to those 15 Members who are to be left to us, not indeed to redress the balance or to make the Committee a microcosm of the House—because 15 are not sufficient to achieve that object—but, as far as the 15 will permit, to diminish that inequitable construction of the Committee of which we complain, and which the Government themselves hardly venture to defend. I do not know how the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks he is saving the time of the House in refusing what even his own supporters must regard as a reasonable request founded in justice. If not, let them give a reason for it. Have your Scotch opinion represented to the full; let every Scotch Member, whether he be qualified specially to deal with the particular Bill or not, be as of right on the Committee; but at all events do not refuse us the simple request we make that other Members shall be added which shall prevent the Committee from being an unfair representation of the balance of opinion in the House, and which removes from the Opposition every conceivable chance when a controverted question comes up in the Committee of making their opinion felt. I am astounded that the Government, in the face of the obvious equities of the case and the deliberate declaration of their own colleague, should take up the attitude they have. All we can do is to resist to the utmost what we believe to be a most unjust proposition, subversive not only of our just rights, but of those who come after us.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The more the Government try the experiment of conciliation the more wrathful the right hon. Gentleman seems to become. I have endeavoured to meet the views of hon. Gentlemen, and apparently our offer is not accepted. I cannot accept the view of the matter put forward by the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. WODEHOUSE (Bath) submitted, as a Member of the Committee of Selection, that to leave the Committee of Selection without instructions as to the duties which they had to perform in this novel and delicate task would be extremely unfair and hard upon them. Seeing that the proposed Scotch Standing Committee would be set up on the entirely new principle of nationality, and thus be a complete departure from all existing precedents and practice, specific directions and guidance should unquestionably be given by the House to the Committee of Selection as to whether they were to have regard to classes of Bills, the composition of the House, or nationalities in the selection of the additional Members.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.), as another Member of the Committee of Selection, said he did not agree with his hon. Friend. He saw not the slightest difficulty about applying the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Committee of Selection would simply have to follow the ordinary course it did when a Committee was partially nominated by the House. The Committee would have nothing to do with the 72 Members appointed by the House, and the duty of selecting 15 of the 30 would be in accordance with the ordinary course.

MR. COURTNEY said, in the cases to which the hon. Member referred the Committee of Selection had simply to add Members representing the different sections of the House, giving a majority of one to the Party in power. But in the case of this Committee they had no nucleus to go upon. On what principle were the 15 Members to be added?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So as to keep the proportion fairly representative.

MR. COURTNEY said, that would be eight on the Government side and seven on the other side. Was that proportion to be observed in the whole Committee? That was the point. But what was the language of the Secretary of State for War? He said, in effect, that the Committee of Selection, in adding the 15, would consider what elements could be brought from the House so as to supplement the nucleus already created, and thereby possibly to redress the unfair Party balance of the Scotch Committee.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: What I said was that probably the Committee of Selection might wish to add Scotchmen sitting for other constituencies, and I said that if they did so, most of those Members being supporters of the Opposition, that would go very far to reduce the disproportion between the two sides. But I do not say that that would be the principle on which the Committee would proceed. ["Oh!"] Hon. Members who said "Oh!" can refer to my words.

MR. COURTNEY said, even if they accepted that statement, it would not do much to redress the unfair representation of the House upon the Grand Committee as proposed by the Government. He would ask how, if the Committee added seven Members of the Opposition and eight supporters of the Government, that could possibly add to the strength of the Opposition and go very far to approach to the disposition of Parties in the House of Commons. But he wished to approach the question in a practical sense. If they had regard to the votes cast in Scotland rather than to the result of the votes, they would find that the proportion was 39 to 33, giving the Government a majority of six. It was in order to redress the absurd misrepresentation of Scotch opinion that the Amendment was proposed, and they could divide in surety that it would be forced on the Government in the future if they sought to extend this principle.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes 241 ; Noes 211.—(Division List, No. 32.)

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

It being after Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next, and Mr. Speaker thereupon suspended the Sitting until Nine o'clock.

EVENING SITTING.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

DUKE OF EDINBURGH (ANNUITY).

RESOLUTION.

*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) rose to call attention to the payment to His Royal Highness the Duke of Coburg of an Annuity; and to move—

> "That the Act of 36 & 37 Vic., c. 80, granting an annuity of £10,000 to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, having provided that, in the event of His said Royal Highness succeeding to any sovereignty or principality Abroad, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty or Her successors, with the consent of Parliament, to revoke or reduce the said annuity by Warrant under the Sign Manual, and His Royal Highness having succeeded to the sovereignty of a Foreign conntry, in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the said annuity shall cease."

He desired to say, in the first place, that it was not his intention, directly or indirectly, to make any attack on the Royal Family, or upon Royal Grants as far as they concerned the Royal Family in this country. The question he desired to raise was not one of that nature at all; but he might say, in passing, that he thought the worst enemies of the Royal Family were those who encouraged them to make too severe demands on the purse of the people. He had heard through the papers, and heard with considerable surprise, that it was the intention of the Government to oppose this Resolution. He hoped that was not true, because this was essentially a question which ought to be left to the unfettered decision of the House, irrespective of Party, and indeed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, in his speech of December 21, distinctly stated that the freedom of Parliament was completely secured under the Acts, and it might take what course it thought proper with regard to these annuities. He had understood that Members were to be perfectly free in voting on this question at any time, but, of course, if the Government made it a question of confidence it could not be said that the House had any freedom in the matter, and he confessed that, as far as he was concerned, he had no desire to interfere with the arrangements of the Government, and certainly he had no wish to defeat them. But it must be remembered that it was not himself and his friends who had done this. He had fully understood that there was to be perfect freedom of Debate, and still he hoped the Government would consent to allow hon. Members to vote on the question in whatever way they thought right as guardians of the public purse. As he understood the matter, in the Acts of 1866 and 1873, with the latter of which they had to deal, there was virtually the same provision, that Her Majesty or her successors, with the consent of Parliament, might revoke or reduce the annuity granted to the Duke of Edinburgh—then Prince Alfred —by Warrant under the Sign Manual. It was quite clear that the Parliament of 1873 assumed that at least part of this grant would be given up, and he took it that this was quite sufficient reason why they should discuss the matter now. He had been told that there was some Treaty regulating this matter, but he could find no reference to it in either Act of Parliament. It might be said that there was some sort of understanding between the Emperor of Russia and this country that the grant should be continued, but he could hardly believe that to be correct, for it must be assumed that the Emperor would have received a copy of the Act of 1873, and have seen that it was within the right of Parliament to discontinue the annuity if it thought fit to do so. He did not think, therefore, that it could be made out that there was an honourable understanding that the grants should be continued in any event. He was aware that there was a clause in the Act of 1873 which provided that in the case of the death of the Duke of Edinburgh an annuity of £6,000 should be given to his widow. There could be no doubt that we should have to carry that out if, unfortunately, the necessity should ever arise. But now they were only dealing with that clause which provided that the Queen, with the consent of Parliament, might reduce or revoke the grant. As far as he was concerned, he looked on the question as merely one of how the House ought, as trustees, to deal with the money of the people of the country. It resolved itself simply into a question of economy, and the duty of Members of that House, as trustees of the public money, was to see it was not in any way wasted or given to those with whom we had nothing to do. He confessed he was rather astonished that the people of Saxe Coburg should for a moment allow their Prince to receive a subsidy from a foreign State. He did not think the people of this country would stand it very long if a foreign country were to subsidise our Sovereign. He was astonished that the people of any German State allowed it. There was a rumour that the Duke's people did not like it, and he trusted that was true. In addition to that, they heard through the newspapers, which were very often right, that Her Majesty and the Prince of Wales, as well as the Leaders of both Parties, had tried to induce the Duke to give up the annuity. ["Oh, oh!"] These were only rumours, and he did not guarantee them. He understood that there was a precedent for giving up a grant of this kind in the case of Leopold, King of the Belgians. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members might laugh, but it appeared to him that the precedent should be followed in this case. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, in the speech to which he had referred, said—

> "I do not think it would be satisfactory to Parliament, or to the people of England, that the Duke of Coburg should abandon his close and affectionate relations with the Queen and his family."

But it seemed to him to be a very weak argument in favour of the annuity to imply that it was necessary to give a man £10,000 a year in order to insure his affection and dutifulness as a son. There were not a few sons who would be very ready to show proper affection towards their parents for a grant of much less than £10,000 a year. He gave that to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what it was worth. One of the daily papers set out this case much better and more eloquently than he could. [*Cries of* "No!"] He referred to a leading article in *The Daily Chronicle* of December 22 last. *The Daily Chronicle* was one of the strongest supporters of the Government, and a paper which he had more respect for than any other in the country. To the Radical and democratic Party it was of the greatest support and usefulness, and he desired not only to make use of its words, but to thank it for them. It said, in the course of its article—

> "On this proposal we have but one comment. We are astounded that the Duke should make it, and we most earnestly hope that Parliament will not accept it. With these opinions we are certain that every Radical in the Three Kingdoms will agree. From the moment that a Royal Prince ceases to be a British citizen—and it is clear from Mr. Gladstone's refusal to answer Mr. Dalziel's direct question on this point that the Duke does thus cease, indeed he has already requested the Queen to remove his name from the Privy Council—it is a matter of entire indifference whether he resides in this country for a part of the year or not. Such action concerns only his own pleasure and the advantage of his own relatives. To put it forward as a counterweight for an annuity of £10,000 is a piece of assurance which takes one's breath away. This country deals very generously and loyally with the members of its reigning House, but we cannot conceive why it should even be expected for a moment to pension a Prince who draws an ample and Royal income from the same source to which he owes his allegiance—namely, a foreign State. Parliament obviously foresaw, when it made the wise conditions we have cited, that these views would be held in England when, if ever, the Duke of Edinburgh became the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. And we most certainly hold them now, and desire to express them with the utmost frankness. We trust that another occasion for bringing the question before Parliament will soon be found."

He had tried to gauge the opinion of the country, and he found that everyone outside Parliament agreed with him that British money ought not to go to this foreign Sovereign. He knew that the question had been raised whether His Royal Highness was a foreigner or not. It appeared to him to be clear that a man could not be the subject of more than one State, and undoubtedly the Duke of Saxe-Coburg had sworn allegiance to Germany as well as to his own State, and if difficulties should ever arise between this country and Germany the Duke would, owing to the nature of his oath, be compelled to oppose this country. He had not the slightest objection to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg residing in this country for a part of the year, and he dared say the Duke's friends would be very glad to see him, and he was sure the tradespeople would be glad of his custom. He (Mr. Morton) had no objection to the Duke of Coburg residing here for a part of the year. The more money that was spent here the better. But this would be money dragged from the British taxpayers. If hon. Gentlemen opposite were honest in voting for this grant they ought to raise the £10,000 by private subscription. He believed they would have a good deal of difficulty in raising such a sum, or any part of it. They were not dealing with their own money, but the money of the taxpayers of this country. Many of these taxpayers were poor, and had nothing to spare. They had hard work to get a bare living for themselves and their children. They had nothing to spare for idle luxuriousness. It might be held by snobs and flunkeys that it was bad taste to question anything that the idle rich might do, or to object to any demands that they might make on the public purse. But it was not only bad taste but inhuman and un-Christian to take the money of the poor taxpayers without their consent, and spend in idle luxury what would save many from starvation and worse. Members were here as trustees of the people's money, and let them see that they did not betray that trust.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that his hon. Friend had laid before the House the views of the Radicals on this grant with his usual cogency and ability. He had heard a great deal of conversation as to the particulars of these grants, and he must say it appeared to him that many hon. Gentlemen in the House were not quite aware of the circumstances of this case; and therefore, in seconding the Resolution, he would submit some facts in connection with it. It would be remembered that last year, towards the end of the Session, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian announced to the House that the Duke of Edinburgh, upon becoming the Sovereign of the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg, had declared his intention of giving up £15,000 out of the £25,000 a year voted to him by Parliament and of retaining the other £10,000 a year. On that occasion he asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he would give a day in order that the matter might be discussed. The right hon. Gentleman said that he was unable to give a day, and no doubt it would have been difficult for him to do so, looking at the fact that business was so much behindhand. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that he (Mr. Labouchere) should find a day for himself, but at that time most of the private Members' days had been taken by the Government. Therefore, a few days afterwards, he asked the Solicitor General whether the question would be prejudiced if a day were not immediately found, or whether a Motion could be brought forward at any time? The hon. and learned Gentleman replied that the case would not be prejudiced by not being gone into at once, and at last a day had been found by the hon. Member for Peterborough. He mentioned this to point out that the right hon. Member for Midlothian had not held the view that the matter was not under the purview of the House, and that the House had not a right to discuss the matter. Indeed, the Act stated specifically that the House had such a right, and, assuming that the Resolution was not carried that evening, it would be a recurrent Resolution until the money was secured to His Royal Highness by Act of Parliament, as it was not at present. The Duke of Edinburgh was the second son of Her Majesty and an English Prince, and, the Prince of Wales having renounced his title to the Duchy of Coburg, the Duke of Edinburgh succeeded and became a German Sovereign. There were Sovereignties and Sovereignties in Germany. He had sometimes seen these Sovereignties ridiculed as being ridiculously small; and no doubt there were some that were small. Some of the Sovereignties were exceedingly small, but this Sovereignty of Saxe-Coburg was a very substantial possession. The Principality had a revenue of 6,500,000 marks, and he was happy to say the country was increasing in wealth and in population. The Budgets of the Principality were prepared every four years, and he had taken the last one in order to see what was the Civil List of His Royal Highness. The Civil List was something between £29,000 and £30,000 per annum. Besides this, the Principality of Leuchtenberg was sold for 2,000,000 marks, and he supposed the Duke enjoyed the income from that. On marriage H.I.H. the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg received 1,500,000 roubles, on which 5 per cent. was to be paid, she having the disposal of that sum for testamentary objects, and besides that, a revenue of 75,000 roubles per annum was assured to her during her life. This, taking the rouble at its present price, would make something like £15,000 per annum. He was not going into matters as to what property the Duke and Duchess might have inherited; he was taking his figures from public documents. In 1866 Parliament voted to the Duke of Edinburgh an annuity of £15,000 a year, and in 1873, on the occasion of his marriage, Parliament voted £10,000 more. In both these cases it was provided that, in the event of his said Royal Highness succeeding to any Sovereignty or Principality abroad, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty or her successors, with the consent of Parliament, to revoke or reduce the said annuity by Warrant under the Sign Manual. It was evident, then, that this contingency was contemplated when these Acts were passed, and it was equally evident that the present Parliament had a right to continue or discontinue this annuity. This, indeed, was impressed upon the House by the Member for Midlothian when he moved the Resolution in 1873. He had gathered that a good many Members were under the impression that they were under an International obligation with Russia to pay this £10,000. This was absolutely inaccurate. He had looked into this Treaty, and it was to all intents and purposes a marriage arrangement with Her Royal Highness. It provided that the children should be brought up as Protestants, and it dealt exclusively with her money, and did not touch in any way the allowance of any moneys then or hereafter to be possessed by the Duke of Edinburgh. There was only one clause in the Treaty which might be considered to refer to it. This was the clause which stated that the children should be educated, maintained, and provided for as was usual in the case of Prince and Princesses of the same rank belonging to the Royal Families of the United Kingdom, so as to exempt H.I.H. from all such charges He did not know what "provided for as usual" meant, for, as a matter of fact, it was specifically laid down that the children of the younger sons and daughters of the Royal House should not be provided for. But, in any case, this provision to maintain and educate would be an exceedingly small one. The Duke had five children. Two daughters were married, and one of the sons was an officer in the Prussian Army; the others were unmarried. But they were all practically provided for, and the Duke could not put this forward as a plea why the money should be given to him. In asking for this £10,000 per annum the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian stated that the words which he had quoted were put in so that no question should come up when the contingency arose as to continuing to provide the money. Therefore, they must treat this treaty as having nothing to do with the matter. They might dismiss the idea that there was any species of International obligation. The third clause in the Act of 1873 secured to Her Imperial Highness, in the event of her surviving her husband, £6,000 per annum. There was no such proviso as to the other amount, and, of course, as to this £6,000, it would be paid in the event of the Duchess surviving her husband. Why were these allowances given to members of the Royal Family? He had opposed a great many of them. It was generally urged in regard to them that an English Prince was expected to keep up a certain amount of display. He was to have the usual paraphernalia of Princes, and he was expected to discharge certain social and ornamental functions. As to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, they were told that he would do that by occasionally residing here. But he did not come here as a member of the English Royal Family; he would come here as a Sovereign Prince of Germany, and no doubt, like other Royal visitors, his relatives would be delighted to entertain him themselves. They were told he was to maintain Clarence House. That was a mistake. Clarence House was part of St. James's Palace, and Parliament maintained it. He was under the impression that it was the business of a Sovereign to reside in his own country, and it was clear that the Duke could not fulfil the double obligations of a German Sovereign and an English Prince. He was released from all his obligations in this country as a Royal Prince, and they were released from all the obligations involved in his being an English Prince. The Duke of Coburg was unquestionably a German. He had sworn allegiance to the German Emperor, and he had withdrawn from the Privy Council. Under the Naturalization Act of 1870 it was clear that he had ceased to be a British subject, and that he must be regarded as an alien. These were not only his views but they were German views also. Count von Caprivi, the German Chancellor, in the Debate in the Bundesrath respecting the position of the Duke of Coburg, said that the capacity of German Sovereign excluded *ipso facto* any dependence upon foreign countries, and maintained that it was impossible for a German Prince to be the subject of a foreign Power. Herr Bonne also argued that the Duke of Coburg could have no obligations toward England not in accordance with his present status in Germany. There was an old statute of Queen Anne by which all the descendants of the Electress Sophia were declared to be English subjects; but he did not suppose that in these days great weight would be attached to that. He had shown that the Duke of Coburg was a foreign Sovereign; that, being a German Sovereign and a member of the German Federation, he was bound, if that Federation went to war with this country, to take part in it against us; that by his own act he had renounced his privileges as an Englishman, and that we were under no International obligation to continue the payment of this grant. The question before the House, therefore, was whether they were prepared to grant money to a foreign Sovereign, and they were asked to find this money at a moment when the funds of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were low, and at a time when they were called upon to expend a vast amount upon the Navy, and were told that soon they must spend large sums in pegging out claims in Africa for the benefit of futurity. He saw many Irish Members present, and he had not the slightest doubt that they had come down to vote for the Resolution. A Bill had just been brought in throwing the cost of the Commission to be appointed for the benefit of the evicted tenants upon the British taxpayer. He felt sure that the Irish Members in their turn would be glad to aid in putting £10,000 a year into the taxpayers' pockets. There was no more reason for giving this sum of money to the Duke of Coburg than there was for giving it to the Emperor of China or the Llama of Thibet. If the country were polled to-morrow it would be unanimous, without any ill-feeling towards the Duke of Coburg, in declining to grant this money, feeling that it might be expended in a much better way at home. He did not expect the support of Her Majesty's Ministers, for experience had taught him that, whatever might be their private opinion, they always felt it to be their duty to support a Royal grant, whether fair or unfair, wise or unwise. Their support was apparently part of the contract involved in their tenure of Office. He saw, however, many Radicals present, and they would vote with him to a man he felt sure. Some Radical Members had told him that they were unfortunately obliged to go away on business, but those who were in the House would be delighted to have this opportunity of giving practical effect to the views which they had so often professed at public meetings on the subject of Royal grants. How the Radicals present must rejoice that a day had been secured for this Resolution! How glad they must be that important private business had not compelled them also to absent themselves! A Radical had said to him that afternoon, "Don't you think that the present excellent Government is worth £10,000 per annum?" He replied that he could not venture to appraise the value of Governments, but he had also said to his friend that he might vote with perfect safety for the Resolution, because if it were carried the Government would certainly not go out. He had sufficient experience of Governments to know how they stuck in. Fancy the Government going to the country with the cry of "The Newcastle Programme and £10,000 a year for the Duke of Edinburgh!" He trusted also to have the support of hon. Members opposite, for he might remind them that there was a time when Tories entertained very sound views with regard to Royal grants. Their support of Colonel Sibthorpe would be remembered. Through his instrumentality and that of the Tories of the time a proposed grant of £50,000 a year was reduced to £30,000, so that they saved £20,000 per annum owing to the determined action of the Tories of that day. He would point out that this was not a question of the maintenance of a Prince in splendour as a bulwark of the Crown. Hon. Gentlemen opposite could vote with him with an excellent conscience, because the question was one as to whether a grant of £10,000 a year was to be paid by the British taxpayers to a foreign Sovereign because that potentate had once been an English Prince, but had preferred to be a German Sovereign and a German.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words,

> "The Act of 36 and 37 Vic., c. 80, granting an annuity of £10,000 to H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, having provided that, in the event of His said Royal Highness succeeding to any sovereignty or principality Abroad, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty or Her successors, with the consent of Parliament, to revoke or reduce the said annuity by Warrant under the Sign Manual, and His Royal Highness having succeeded to the sovereignty of a Foreign country, in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the said annuity shall cease,"—(*Mr. A. C. Morton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, he would have been very glad to have gone into the Lobby that evening with his hon. Friend the amusing Member for Northampton, because he felt that in that world of politics they owed a great deal to any hon. Gentleman capable of enlivening the usually dreary tone of the Debate by imparting to his own speeches a light and airy touch whenever he made one of his incessant efforts to defeat the Government. If one of these days the unwearying Member for Northampton should succeed, and the Queen sent for him to form a Government, and if he was able to form a Government, and if that would be a stronger and more Radical Government than the present one, nothing would give him greater pleasure than to support him. But on the present occasion he was not going to do so. On the present occasion they were not considering a purely jocular matter, and he therefore asked to be excused while for a few minutes he intruded on their attention in order to state the reasons for the vote he was about to give. His hon. Friend had stated that the question resolved itself into this—whether they were going to give to a foreign Prince the sum of £10,000 a year. If that were really the question before the House, he should certainly vote on grounds of public policy against such a grant being made. But that was not, he submitted, the real position of affairs. The question they had to consider was not whether they had to give a grant, but whether they were to violate a contract. That was the point of view from which he intended to approach the question. He wished to consider the question from the same point of view as if he were a father who had made a provision for his son at the time of his marriage, and in the marriage settlement had inserted a stipulation that under certain conditions he might reduce or revoke the amount of money granted. His hon. Friend replied to him that that was not in the Treaty, but the question did not depend upon the Treaty. They had to look to the true construction of the Act of Parliament under which the money was paid. Anyone who turned to the Debates in Parliament on this subject must see that the position taken up by his hon. Friend was entirely untenable. There was a clause in that Act to the effect that should the Duke of Edinburgh become the Duke of Coburg then that House should have a right to reconsider the grant. The grant was expressly stated to have been made for a provision not only of His Royal Highness, but also for the Duchess of Edinburgh as well. When the grant was proposed the then Member for Glasgow, a countryman of his own (Mr. Anderson), moved that if ever the Duke of Edinburgh should become the Duke of Coburg the grants of £15,000 and £10,000 should both *ipso facto* terminate. That was a simple and intelligible policy, and Mr. Anderson pointed out that if the Parliament adopted any other plan difficult and delicate questions would be sure to arise in which the mother might be placed in a situation of hostility to the son. But what was the view that was taken by the House of Commons then? His Amendment found so little support that the hon. Member did not even press it to a Division. Personally, he felt strictly bound by the provisions of that Act of Parliament, for it was to be remembered that Acts of Parliament were special contracts which must be honourably carried out, and fairly and faithfully interpreted. The provision was not granted to His Royal Highness only until such time as he succeeded to the Duchy of Coburg. Parliament would not make the grant on those terms, but preferred to retain the power to revoke or reduce the annuity by Warrant under the Sign Manual. It was obvious Parliament contemplated that a reduced annuity might be given to the Duke should he succeed to the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg, and thus the whole point of his hon. Friend's case failed, because that case was that the Duke on becoming a foreign Prince ceased to be a British subject. He did not admit that the fact that the Duke of Edinburgh had ceased to be a British subject under these circumstances was a sufficient ground for the grant being stopped. The right hon. Member for Midlothian, when he was asked at the time that the grant was made his opinion of this question, said he did not think it would be wise to prescribe what course should be pursued by Parliament whenever the Duke of Edinburgh succeeded to the Duchy. It would be more wise to leave Parliament free, in order that it might do what was best whenever the circumstances arose. Now, what was the effect of the bargain into which they entered in 1873? The accession of the Duke to the Principality of Coburg was a circumstance which might put him in such a financial position that he ought not to have the whole of the £25,000 which was provided by Parliament, and that that sum might be reduced, or might even be entirely taken away if the circumstances justified it. £15,000 had been taken away, or rather the Duke had voluntarily relinquished that amount, and therefore the House was dealing with a reduced annuity, and the question it was now asked to decide was that even a reduced annuity was intolerable, because he was a foreign Prince. What were the circumstances that had arisen which would justify Her Majesty, with the consent of Parliament, in asking that the whole £25,000 should be taken away? Speaking as a matter of common sense, the obvious meaning of the bargain was that if by the Duke's accession to the Duchy of Coburg he was in a financial position to justify his dispensing with the provision provided by Parliament, that provision ought to be taken away. What were the financial circumstances? His hon. Friend knew nothing, and told the House nothing; he was not in a position to give the House authentic information.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Excuse me, I am in a position, because all this information is public. The Estimate of the Revenue in the Duchy of Coburg for four years is laid down. The last Estimate was in 1891 or 1892 for the following four years. The Revenues of the Duchy of Coburg and Gotha are divided between the Revenues derived from the State domains and the general revenues of the State.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: Can you lay the Papers on the Table of the House?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The noble Lord must ask the Government for the Papers, and no doubt they will be delighted to supply them. The noble Lord should not expose his ignorance in this way. I was under the impression that every one knew about the Revenues of Coburg and Gotha, which is notorious public knowledge. This is how I arrive at the amount of £29,000. The Duke receives from the State domains of Gotha 100,000 marks; a second 100,000 marks goes into the State chest, and the Duke receives half of all in excess of it. The Duke also receives one-half of the excess of Revenue over Expenditure from the Coburg domain lands. I forget exactly what the revenue is. If the noble Lord will inquire he will find the result——

Lord R. CHURCHILL: Where can I get it?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The noble Lord will find that the result is this. The excess is between 900,000 marks and 1,000,000 marks per annum. The Duke gets a half of this, and in addition to the 100,000 marks he receives from the other Duchy, he gets 582,000 marks. If hon. Members will divide this by 20 they will see that that amount reaches between £29,000 and £30,000 per annum. The noble Lord can get this information in the Library of the House of Commons from *The Statesman's Year Book* for 1894.

*Mr. HUNTER said, he was much obliged to his hon. Friend for having now disclosed what he supposed must be called his case; but he had not told the House anything about the expenditure. It might be that there were obligations of expenditure with regard to public objects which had to be paid out of this money. He believed that in the Duke's dominions there was a State theatre, and the subsidies for the theatre, as was a common practice in Germany, might be a charge against this revenue. If the House of Commons was to decide this question rightly, and upon a full knowledge of the facts, they must have these facts presented, not partially and incompletely and at second-hand, but fully and perfectly, and with all details both of expenditure and income; and then only would the House be in a position to form an independent opinion as to whether the circumstances of the Duke were such as to justify a further reduction below the £10,000. The House was not without guidance in this matter. The right hon. Member for Midlothian was fully acquainted with all the facts, and he assumed that the right hon. Gentleman would not give an opinion without taking care to know it was founded on fact. The late Prime Minister stated as his deliberate opinion on a full knowledge of the facts—[Mr. LABOUCHERE: Where?]—in December, that in his opinion the Duke ought not to be called upon to sacrifice more than £15,000 out of the £25,000. ["Why?"] Because he assumed that the late Prime Minister knew the whole of the facts of the case, and he was afraid that the hon. Member did not. That was his position. He had no information which would justify him in arriving at a different opinion from that arrived at by the late Prime Minister. If without that knowledge, in an arbitrary, capricious, and wholly unreasonable manner, he was to vote for the rescission of this contract he should be doing an act which, as a private individual, he could not justify in his conscience. He thought that the House ought not to exhibit a less degree of honour and scrupulousness in the maintenance of public transactions than a private individual would show in dealing with his own affairs.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland) said, that his hon. Friend who had just sat down might have spared the hon. Member for Northampton one gibe. He began by saying that he could not follow his hon. Friend in this one among many attempts to defeat the Government. He would ask his hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen whether he would have voted differently if there had been a Tory Government in power? Had not the hon. Member for Northampton consistently for many years, with the support of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, opposed all these Royal grants? The hon. Member for Aberdeen, the Radical of Radicals, whose hard Scotch head no one had thought could be diverted from principle by suggestions of the fate of a Government, came down to the House, and upon the merest whisper of the Whip tried to persuade the common-sense people in and out of the House that this question had anything to do with the fate of the Government. He should like to see the Government go to his constituency with a cry of "Home Rule for Ireland; a vote for every man; and £10,000 for the Coburger." He thought the hon. Member's suggestion was a little unworthy. The hon. Member said that he knew nothing of the facts, and he added that neither did the hon. Member for Northampton. What had they to do with these financial facts? He had many a time opposed these Royal grants, and always on grounds apart from these financial facts. And in every speech he had made on the subject—and he remembered being howled down on his first speech—he had stated as his reason for opposing the grants that the House was the trustee of the public money. Taxes were paid by the rich and the poor, and the House had no right to spend the money except for public purposes, and it was a fundamental principle of this expenditure that there should be adequate return made to the State for the sums provided. The Prime Minister was paid, and he did work; the officials of the House were paid, and they did work; the head of the State was paid, and did honourable work for the State. But as to the Duke of Edinburgh, he had always held that it was the duty of the House as public trustee to pay the head of the State an adequate, handsome, and generous remuneration, and to leave to the head of the State, as the head of every family in the country, the duty of providing for his or her children. He did not shrink from that position now. He would never have voted £25,000 for the Duke of Edinburgh at any time; but when the House of Commons voted this money the Duke did live in the country, and performed what they were accustomed to call services to the State. He kept up what foolish people called Royal dignity. [Lord R. Churchill: "Royal what?"] But now the Duke had ceased to live in this country, and had ceased to be an Englishman. He had undertaken duties and responsibilities which might involve him in war with this country, and his troops might slay men who had contributed towards the £10,000. It was monstrous that such a proposal should be made to the House. His hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen had said that the Duke had a revenue, but that there were many charges upon it. The hon. Member even mentioned a theatre; and he supposed the suggestion was that the British taxpayer was to find £10,000 a year in order that the Duke might keep up a public theatre. The hon. Member was pleading poverty on the part of the Duke, and was begging the people of England, on the score of poverty, to give him a revenue. If he himself were a German, he would be ashamed that such a discussion should take place in the British House of Commons about one of the German Princes. And if he interpreted aright the feeling of Count Caprivi and such men, they were ashamed that such a position should have been possible. As an Englishman he deplored the fact that such a petty demand should be made on the taxpayers of this country. When the Duke succeeded to his present position he would, if he had been a wise man, have said:—"For 20 years and more I have received £20,000 a year and more from the State. I have been handsomely paid for the public services I have rendered, and now that I have a foreign Principality and foreign duties, it is beneath the dignity of the great Royal Family to which I belong any longer to come to the people of England, rich and poor, and ask them for this paltry sum." It was on public and general grounds that he asked the Radicals who were worthy of the name of Radicals to justify their position and vote for the Motion.

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The hon. Gentleman sat down using the expression that public money was being paid in a direction where no services were rendered, and he said that they were voting money for a foreign Prince and a man who had never rendered any public service. ["No, no!"] Oh yes; and certainly that was the intention of the hon. Gentleman——

Mr. STOREY rose to explain.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: No, no; I will not allow him to interrupt me. The hon. Member for Sunderland said we were voting money for a petty man. ["No!"] What is the use of uttering senseless noes? I made a note of the word. Those noes are uttered because hon. Members did not listen to the speech, and if they think they are going to put me down they are much mistaken. I expect hon. Gentlemen to stick to their speeches, and not repudiate them. The hon. Member for Sunderland said that the Royal Family rendered no public services. [*Cries of* "No!"] I have a right to address the House without being interrupted. We have listened in silence to the speeches of the hon. Member for Northampton and the hon. Member for Sunderland, which contained statements revolting to hon. Members on this side. [*Laughter.*] This is not fair treatment, but I mean to go on in spite of interruptions. The hon. Member for Sunderland turned in an impressive way to the gentlemen behind the Government, and said that they as Radicals would not spend public money where services were not rendered. Whom was he speaking against? The Royal Family. [*Cries of* "No!"] What! Do you think I am to be taken in by the obvious oratorical artifices of the hon. Member for Sunderland? I understand every word he says on Royal grants, and I have heard them many times before from Radical Members. He stated that he would never have voted £15,000 for the Duke of Edinburgh. What would he have left him to do? He would have left him to sweep a crossing. That was the logical outcome of his theory. And if the Duke had not found a crossing to sweep, the hon. Member would have left him to starve.

Mr. CONYBEARE: His mother has plenty of money. ["Order!"]

Lord R. CHURCHILL: I have got a very fine quotation for the Irish Party. The hon. Member for Sunderland gave us his idea of Royal dignity, and said these were none of his Princes. What are the hon. Member's Princes? Have they Princes in the North? Does the hon. Member know much about the cost of keeping up what he called the Royal dignity? Does he think the processions of the Sovereign and members of the Royal Family through the streets of London and of our large towns to open Hospitals, Museums, or Universities cost nothing? Has the hon. Member ever had the Royal Family in Sunderland? [Mr. STOREY: No.] Then it is a disgrace to him. Does the hon. Member know at what the cost of the Royal Family was calculated, on the occasion of the last Debate on the Royal grant, by the most eminent mathematician within the House of Commons? Sir Lyon Playfair then reckoned the cost of the Royal Family, per head of the people of this country, at the minutest fraction of a farthing that the human mind could conceive. This is what the hon. Member for Sunderland will not vote! This is the sort of thing with which the hon. Member for Sunderland and the hon. Member for Northampton think it worth while to occupy the time of the House of Commons with, and they have said it all before. Every word of the hon. Member for Sunderland's statement and every word of the hon. Member for Northampton's speech I have heard in the speeches against Royal grants during the last few years. We never heard speeches against Royal grants in the Parliament of 1874 or in the Parliament of 1886. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was Prime Minister we never heard anything against Royal grants.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Oh, oh.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Oh, perhaps the hon. Member for Northampton made such speeches, but I do not think he was in the Parliament of 1874.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes, he was.

LORD R. CHURCHILL: Oh, yes, he was. I remember that he was the colleague of Mr. Bradlaugh. Certainly he was in the Parliament of 1874, but he stood alone on this question. The stoutest defender of Royal grants in this House and of the proper maintenance of the Royal Family was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and if the hon. Member for Northampton had in his presence made the speech he has made to-night—a speech which I will describe in a minute—he would have had such a towelling as he has never yet had from the Member for Midlothian, whose loss to this House I have never been able adequately to measure, and who alone could keep the hon. Member in order. I am well acquainted with the speeches of the hon. Member for Northampton about the Royal Family. I am afraid he has got very near in all those speeches to what in ordinary society or in the Press would be called scurrility. He feasts and intoxicates himself on Royal grants. When he gets a Royal grant he is a different man from what he is on any other subject. His imagination is far more—what shall I say?—not fertile—I could use a different adjective, but I do not think it would be in Order. His treatment of facts about the Royal Family is, however, remarkable. He distorts them and perverts them with the greatest freedom, and, if it is necessary, he invents for the delectation of the House conversations with certain Democrats whom I defy him to produce on the floor of this House. I think also that if he is a little short of facts he draws freely on his imagination. And this is the attitude on Royal grants of the man who is responsible for *Truth*. I never heard him say in this House one word which was put into that celebrated journal on the subject of the Royal Family. The hon. Gentleman could not quote a single great Radical who opposed Royal grants. He could only give the name of Colonel Sibthorpe, who is hardly an authority on modern Tory policy. Did he ever hear Mr. Bright speak in this House against Royal grants? Was not Mr. Bright a Radical? Was he not a greater Parliamentary authority than Colonel Sibthorpe? The hon. Member is fond of speaking to Northampton bootmakers and shoemakers, and he is fond of speaking at hole-and-corner meetings in the Metropolis. I will invite him to come down to Bradford and to summon a meeting in St. George's Hall for the express purpose of delivering an address on the vices and the defects of and the necessity of abolishing the Monarchy and the Royal Family of this country. I invite him to do that—to meet the real people, and not merely the bootmakers and shoemakers and those who go to hole-and-corner meetings. I think he will be very fortunate if he gets 300 people into that hall, and I think he will be very fortunate if he escapes from that hall with his life. The hon. Member professes to be very learned on the Revenues of the Coburg Duchy, and I will read to the hon. Member an extract from the very book to which he has referred me—*The Statesman's Year Book* for this year. This is what I find there—

> "On the extinction of the line of Saxe-Gotha in 1826 Ernst III. received Gotha in exchange for Saarbruck, which was assigned to Saxe-Meiningen, and assumed the title of Ernst I. of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. The family is in possession of a large private fortune, accumulated chiefly by Duke Ernst I., to whom the Congress of Vienna made a present of the Principality of Leuchtenberg. That Principality he sold, September 22, 1834, for the sum of 2,000,000 thalers."

Everybody knows, except the hon. Member for Northampton, that Duke Ernst I. was far from economical with the Royal property, or, indeed, nobody knows it better than the hon. Member. What does *The Statesman's Year Book* say about the late Duke?

> "The reigning Duke has a civil list of 100,000 marks out of the income of the Gotha Domain; 100,503 marks are paid into the Public Exchequer, while the rest is divided between the Duke and the State; and the Duke further receives one-half of the excess of the revenue over the expenditure of the Gotha Domain Lands"

I have given the income of Duke Ernst I., and I deny that that income has descended to the present Duke. I will not continue the story, because the hon. Member knows it.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I do not know it.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: The hon. Gentleman refused to lay Papers on the Table in support of his statement, and I content myself with *The Statesman's Year Book* in support of mine. The hon. Member said this Resolution would be carried and the Government would stick to Office. My opinion is that this Resolution will not be carried, and that the Government will remain in Office with perfect honour on this subject, because the Government are following all the traditions of their late great Leader. The hon. Gentleman is following no traditions; he is simply following his own extraordinary ideas. His Radicalism is of a pattern of his own. It consists of abuse of every person in a high position and of attempts to hold up every such person to ridicule, and if possible to bring them into public hatred and public odium. I want to address a few words to the Irish Members. [*Laughter.*] I believe they are going to vote against Royal grants. If I read to them the words of O'Connell they will not laugh. I am going to quote from *The Annual Register* of 1839. O'Connell was speaking at a meeting at Bandon on the 5th of December, 1839, just after the marriage of our present Sovereign had been announced to Parliament in the Queen's Speech, and he said——

> "We must be, we are, loyal to our young Queen—God bless her." (Tumultuous cheers.)

[*Radical laughter.*] Yes, these are sentiments that you do not understand.

> "We must be, we are, attached to the Throne and to the Princess by whom it is filled."

And then he went on to make a joke.

> "I wish she may have as many children as my grandmother had."

[*Laughter.*] Some of the hon. Members from Ireland must have some recollections of O'Connell. Could he not say a thing like that? He went on to say——

> "God bless the Queen. I am a father and a grandfather, and in the face of Heaven I pray with as much honesty and fervency for Queen Victoria as I do for any of my own children. The moment I heard of the daring and audacious menaces towards the Sovereign I promulgated through the Press my feelings of detestation and my determination in the matter. Oh, if I be not greatly mistaken, I would get in one day 500,000 brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honour, and the person of the beloved young lady by whom England's Throne is now filled. Let every man in this vast assembly that is stretched out before me who is loyal to the Queen and who would defend her to the last, lift up his right hand."

Every man responded to the appeal, and O'Connell continued—

> "There are hearts in those hands, and I tell you that, if necessity required, there would be swords."

That was Ireland then, and Ireland as she may be again, because I am certain that Ireland will never follow the lead of the hon. Member for Northampton. I pass away, Sir, from this Radical trash, which is vomited forth on us whenever we have to consider the proper maintenance of the Royal family. Here we have a peculiar grant which Parliament cannot touch, and which no speech or Resolution of the hon. Member for Northampton or the hon. Member for Sunderland can possibly invalidate. We have a grant of £10,000 settled by Act of Parliament on the Duke and Duchess of Coburg on their marriage. Do gentlemen opposite think that if they carried their Resolution to-night it would affect that law? This £10,000 remains beyond their grasp, and they are beating the air in making these speeches and trying to invalidate the Act. The only credit those hon. Members can take to themselves is that of having wasted an evening of the time of the House of Commons, of having filled many columns of the Press which will sicken the mass of the public to-morrow, and of having plunged deeper into the mire of notorious and grave indication of hatred of the Monarchy and of determination, if possible, to bring the Royal family into public odium.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Mr. Speaker, before I go to the direct question of these grants, there are one or two points in the speeches of my hon. Friends who moved and seconded this Motion which I think I ought to notice. First of all, my hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough referred to certain rumours in the Press with regard to Her Majesty the Queen. I confess I regret he should have made such a reference as that. To refer to the opinions of the Queen to influence the decision of this House is a thing which the House of Commons has always carefully abstained from. To refer to those opinions as rumours in the Press—well, Sir, if we were to be judged by rumours in the Press, I think we should be ill-judged, and I undertake to say that those rumours to which the hon. Member referred are absolutely without foundation and contrary to the fact. My hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough asked whether the House of Commons had freedom in this matter. The House of Commons has absolute freedom in this matter. It is the master of this subject, and the right of judging of it has been reserved to the House of Commons; but it is for the House of Commons to determine what that judgment shall be with respect to its own dignity and its own sense of what is due to the Sovereign as well as to itself. There has been a good deal said about the Duke of Coburg's position as a foreign Prince. There has been a certain amount of very doubtful International Law introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton. I am not going into that question. I am not going to discuss the particular civil status of the Duke of Edinburgh. It is enough for me in dealing with this question to speak of the Duke of Coburg as a son of the Queen of England. My hon. Friend said that my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian invited him to find a day for this discussion. I have looked at the report, and certainly there is nothing of that kind, but quite the reverse. Asked by my hon. Friend whether an opportunity would be given for an expression of the opinion of hon. Members on the subject, my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian said—

> "Any discussion in this House would be quite inconsistent with the views I have already stated. I must again declare my strong opinion that I do not suppose the House of Commons would think that the Duke of Coburg ought to drop altogether his connection with this country and the recollections of the life he has passed in it. I conceive that those recollections ought not to be dropped, and if, on the contrary, they are to be maintained by periodical residence, it would not be the view of the House of Commons, or, I think, of the hon. Member, that the expenditure on the residence ought not to be paid for out of the pockets of the people of this country."

My right hon. Friend added, in answer to a further question, that there would be no advantage in affording the opportunity asked for. Therefore, it cannot be said that my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian gave any encouragement to the discussion of this subject. There was a good deal said by the Member for Northampton about the present income of the Duke of Coburg. The view of the Government from the first on this subject was that we had nothing to do with that question. We are not dealing with that question at all. We are dealing with the question of what it is fitting to do with respect, as I have said, to the son of the Queen, and to him in his capacity as an English Prince, which he still is. Just let me very briefly recall what is the history of this transaction. By the Act of 1866 there was settled upon the Duke of Edinburgh, then unmarried, a sum of £15,000 a year, which was the same as was given to the other Princes in the same situation. This provision was accompanied by the proviso which has been referred to, on the supposition that he might become a foreign Prince. Now, a great many arguments have been held to show that it would be quite improper that one who became a foreign Prince should receive a grant from Parliament. But, then, what is the meaning of this proviso? Why did not it say the grant should cease and determine? It is perfectly plain that the view taken by the House of Commons in 1866 was not that it was inconsistent with the position of a foreign Prince that he should receive a grant, because the provision was that the House of Commons might revoke or reduce it. The grant was given on the distinct hypothesis that under given circumstances it would be bestowed on an English Prince who became a foreign Sovereign. Otherwise, there was no meaning in the proviso at all. Now we come to the Act of 1873. Attention has already been called to the different character of that grant. The first was a grant to the Duke of Edinburgh personally; the second was a grant, not to the Duke of Edinburgh personally, but in order to provide for the establishment of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and Her Imperial Highness, the only daughter of the Emperor of Russia, on their marriage. Therefore, that was not a grant to a single individual, and was of quite a different character. I do not say that that made it an irrevocable grant. The Act of Parliament in terms admits the power of revocation or reduction. But when the House of Commons comes to consider whether it will exercise that power, the character of the grant is a most material consideration in arriving at a decision. My hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough said that we had not reduced this particular grant. No, you must look at the thing as a whole. You must take it as the £25,000, and not as the £10,000 which remains and the £15,000 which has been extinguished. The grant has already been reduced, not by the hostile action of the House of Commons, but by the voluntary surrender of the Duke, to the extent of £15,000 out of the £25,000. Therefore, as the matter stands at present, not waiting for the adverse action of the House of Commons, but by the voluntary action of the Duke of Coburg, a reduction of that material character in accordance with the proviso in the statute has already been made. The question which the Government had to determine was this. Was that or was that not a proper action upon the powers reserved under the statute to Parliament? The Government—and I speak of the Government as it was when we had the inestimable advantage of the Leadership of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, and as it is now as being one and the same, because there are the same persons with the same responsibility for the decision in this matter—the Government when under the right hon. Member for Midlothian came to the decision that that was a proper proceeding. How could we do otherwise? As I have pointed out, this is not a matter of purely legal interpretation. It has been very properly stated in the able speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen that this is a question of policy—a policy of which Parliament is the judge. The question was deliberately put, when this grant was made in 1873, by Mr. Anderson, the Member for Glasgow, that the revocation should be made absolute. Parliament determined then that the revocation should not be absolute. They determined then that it should be a conditional revocation only, or a reduction according to the judgment which Parliament formed upon the policy of the case at the time. My right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, who was then responsible for the grant, and for the advice of Parliament, and the conduct of the majority, said, in words which have been already quoted—

> "He would observe that though in the course of time the Duke of Edinburgh might become a foreign Sovereign, he would not therefore cease to be an English Prince. He would still continue to have family relationships and household connexions to maintain . . . . The grant might in that case be modified, but it could not be extinguished."

How is it possible that a Minister with this responsibility could come to any other decision? Then Mr. Anderson, who had made the Motion for an absolute revocation, asked whether he understood that the grant would be reduced, but would not terminate on the accession of the Duke to a foreign Principality; and Mr. Gladstone answered—

> "He did not venture to point out what would occur. What he said was that it might be reasonable to reserve the power given in the proviso. But, on the other hand, it would not be reasonable to provide for the extinction of the annuity."

Therefore, there was a unanimous decision of the House of Commons at the time to accept that interpretation placed upon the grant by the Member for Midlothian, and upon those grounds and that assurance the grant was made. Would it be fair, under those circumstances, with that statement made and annexed to the grant and annuity, to now place a different and an opposite interpretation upon the matter? We came to the conclusion, and we adhere to the conclusion, that it would be absolutely impossible to depart from that contemporaneous statement which was accepted by the House of Commons at the time. I do not deny the absolute right of the hon. Members for Peterborough, Northampton, and Sunderland to form their own opinions on the subject and to say that we are wrong. But we are obliged to accept that position, and we must adhere to it. I do not condemn—it would be wrong to do so—those who form a different judgment on the matter. I only point out on what grounds the Government, having given careful consideration to this subject, formed the view they arrived at. This is a question which the House of Commons must determine, and I think the House will determine it in a manner which will well become it. I have said before that it is not fitting that the name of the Sovereign should be used in these Debates to influence their decision; but at the same time, without violating that rule, which ought never to be violated, I cannot but feel, and I think the House will feel, that there never was selected a more inauspicious moment than this to do a most ungracious deed. I do not think it is a proceeding which, even if the House of Commons were to sanction it, would commend itself to the sentiments of the English people. I quite admit that my hon. Friends have full right to make their protest and to give expression to their opinions on the subject, but I earnestly trust that if anything we have said to-night should have convinced them that there are views on the question which are such as to commend themselves to a majority of this House they will not press the matter to a Division, which I do not think would redound to the credit of our proceedings. I would press my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton not to persist in the Motion. I have no right to appeal to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. They will, of course, take the view of the subject which they think best and most fitting, and I have little doubt as to the view they will take of it. [Mr. STOREY. Hear, hear!] I heard an ironical cheer from my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland. I know very well that I have little influence with him. I never felt more than I do at this time the absence of that great Leader whose place I so unworthily fill. Speaking to gentlemen on this side of the House he might have had some personal influence to which I make no pretension; but this I will say—that, under the circumstances of to-night, I, at all events, do most earnestly urge upon the gentlemen who sit on these Benches, in the name of the Government, whom I believe they desire to support, to sustain the decision at which that Government has deliberately arrived.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Speaker, it is hardly necessary for me to rise for the purpose of re-arguing the question which has been so ably dealt with by the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, but I cannot let this Debate come to a conclusion without expressing, in perfectly unambiguous terms, the view which I hold, and which I hope every hon. Gentleman who is in the habit of acting with me will be prepared to support in the Lobby. I deplore deeply this Debate, which the hon. Member opposite has thought it consistent with his duty to initiate. I do not know what is to be gained by it; I see much to be lost by it; but, at all events, whatever may be the upshot of it, it is plain that the House of Commons is at this moment perfectly free to register what decision it pleases on this question. At the same time, it should be recollected that we are dealing with a decision of the House of Commons arrived at 20 years ago, when it was deliberately indicated that, in the event of the Duke of Edinburgh succeeding to the Duchy of Coburg, it would probably not be expedient, whatever might have been thought at the time that occurred, to withdraw the grant which Parliament then decided deliberately to confer upon the son of the Queen. I heard with surprise and some pain the speech of the hon. Member for Sunderland. He said nothing disloyal to the Crown, but he indicated his deliberate view that, with regard to the children of the Sovereign, we had no obligations whatever, that the sole obligation lay upon the Queen, and that she was to provide for all her children out of the Crown funds, of which she has command.

Mr. STOREY said, he had indicated only his view that the proper way was for the State to pay an adequate, a handsome, a generous amount to the Sovereign, but that she should provide for her children just as other parents did.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: May I remind the House and the hon. Member that the Civil List was settled upon the hypothesis that the Sovereign should not provide for her children, but that the country should provide for them. If the hon. Member thinks we should not provide for them he should be a party to increasing the Civil List, which was determined and settled at a time when the decision of the country, universally accepted by men of all Parties, was that the duty of providing for the children of the Sovereign rested, not upon the Sovereign herself, but upon this House, and the liberality of the country over which she reigns. I confess when I reflect that this settlement was made nearly a generation ago, and that the Prince in whose favour it was made has since that period done distinguished service to his country and ranks at this moment amongst the very first naval officers whom this country has ever possessed, I do think that it is an ungracious thing to take advantage of the first opportunity that presents itself to cut down—not merely to cut down but to destroy altogether—the allowance which this House has granted to him. I notice that a great economist who supports this alteration of our regulations is now out of the House, and I greatly regret it, because the hon. Member for Northampton, who I understand is the leader in this movement of revolt against the Government—not for the first time—a few hours ago put down a Motion for the payment of Members. I am always amused by Radical economy. Here we have the hon. Member for Northampton making a speech against continuing this grant of £10,000 a year to a Prince who is the son of the Sovereign and in the same 24 hours putting a Motion upon the Notice Paper which, if it were carried into practical effect, would impose upon the country a burden of £500,000 a year at least. The economies of the hon. Member are singularly contrived. They are all economies at somebody else's expense, and when he does make demands upon the resources of the taxpayers of this country, whom at other times he is so anxious to protect, it is always in his own favour and that of his particular friends that he makes a draft upon public generosity. I do not really think that the House will endorse the views of the hon. Gentleman. Let me suppose that the case which we have before us was reversed. We are dealing with the marriage settlements of an English Prince who married a Russian Princess, and we propose to cut down these settlements to nothing at all. What should we say of a Russian Tsar who took similar opportunities of making an economy if a Russian Prince had married an English Princess. Are we to be meaner, is this House and this country to be meaner, than any country in Europe? Are we to hold ourselves up as objects of the contempt and scorn of every country which has a Monarchy and which desires to support a Monarchy? If you want to get rid of your Monarchy, say so. If your view is that it is a luxury too expensive for this impoverished country to support, make a public profession of your faith. But if, as the majority of you undoubtedly hold, we are attached to and ought to retain the Monarchy with which are bound up the whole traditions of our Constitutional freedom, then to wrangle over every sixpence which we vote to keep up the dignity of the Throne surely is to show ourselves what we are sometimes accused of being, a nation of hucksters and of shopkeepers. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down rested his case largely upon the authority of a statesman whose counsels are no longer present to guide us. I, at all events, though I have not agreed with that great man on the broad lines of his policy, have always felt that as regards the relations which ought to subsist between this House and the reigning family of this country he was a guide whom we should all be proud to follow. And I think that in the particular arrangement which he proposed—though it has fallen to others to support it—he was animated by the same desire loyally to support the dignity of the Sovereign as animated him throughout the whole of his political life; and I am sure if he were here to support by speech the policy which he himself was the first to initiate, he would add most powerful assistance and he would prove a most powerful ally in the cause in which I am convinced the majority of this House feel that their honour is engaged. True it is, as the right hon. Gentleman and speakers opposed to the right hon. Gentleman have said in the course of this Debate, the House of Commons is free to do what it likes. But the question before us is not whether we are free to vote for this Resolution, but how we ought to use the freedom which we undoubtedly enjoy. And on this point I have no right to appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite. But I have a right to appeal to my friends on this side of the House, and I doubt not how that appeal will be answered. It is plain to me there is behind the right hon. Gentleman opposite a Party whose magnitude I have no power to estimate, but who, if report speaks truly, are formidable in numbers as they are powerful in Debate. And it may be conceivable that there are persons vehemently opposed to the Government in their general policy who would take advantage of this circumstance to put them in a position of difficulty and embarrassment. But I am convinced that if such persons there are in this House they will, on reflection, see that here is a case in which all loyal subjects of the Throne, all who desire to support the honour of the Crown and to respect the traditions of Parliament, all who are anxious to carry out the spirit of engagements long ago entered into in this House, will throw aside every small Party feeling and will unite together, irrespective of the petty considerations which may on smaller occasions animate us in our daily conflicts across the floor of this House, and that we shall support the Government when they loyally try to carry out their duty as the servants of Her Majesty, and that we shall be found in the Lobby voting against a Resolution which, if it were carried, would, in my judgment, inflict a lasting stain on the honour of this House.

Mr. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) should not detain the House for more than a single moment, but after the speeches that had been made he was not content to give a silent vote. With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, he ventured to say he had totally misrepresented the point that was really at issue. It was not a question of the maintenance of the British Monarchy and whether or not they approved of the expenditure which the British Monarchy cost. That was totally beside the question now before the House. The question they had to decide was whether or not this House had the power to review the decision arrived at in 1866 and confirmed in 1873. And he could not but regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House, whom all on that side respected, had thought it proper on an occasion like this to appeal to the high personal respect which he knew they entertained for him, and ask them to sink their solemn judgment with regard to this question, and put their respect before it in the decision they were to take. Highly as he respected the right hon. Gentleman, and highly as he appreciated his Leadership in the House, he said that on a question like this, coming forward on the Motion of a private Member, he retained his right of judgment. He said, that the point that this Debate had really turned upon was whether or not this was a question of honour they had to consider. If it could be shown that in approving of any grant in 1886, and again in 1873, that that was a deliberate engagement entered into with the Royal Prince, for his part he would not for a single moment attempt to contest that decision. But the facts were altogether contrary to that case. Why was it that the Amendment was withdrawn in 1873? The Amendment was withdrawn on the distinct understanding that the question as to whether the Prince should continue to receive the annuity, when he should come to the Throne of Saxe-Coburg, should be left open for the Parliament of the time being to decide. The Amendment of 1873 was moved by Mr. Anderson, and withdrawn on a personal appeal to him by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. This was the reason the right hon. Gentleman gave for making that appeal—

> "In case the Duke of Edinburgh, in the course of nature, should succeed to a Principality abroad which should vote its own revenue

and condition of expenses, his position would be so materially altered from that of a simple person of a junior member of the Royal Family that it would not be wise to prescribe beforehand what might or might not be done."

It was perfectly clear the right hon. Gentleman did not determine the question, for he said that the responsibility for settling the question should be left to the Parliament of the time being. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to mention the case of the King of the Belgians, who was placed in a precisely similar position and relinquished his allowance, and in appealing to hon. Members he left the impression that he was suggesting that this was the course the Duke of Edinburgh should follow in similar circumstances. He maintained that the Government ought to have allowed Parliament an opportunity of deciding on this question. Parliament was not consulted, and it was by the merest accident of the ballot that they were able to discuss it at all. He said it was not a question of confidence in the Government, but if the Government thought they had represented the feelings of their followers in this House, why did they not leave the Motion to stand on its own merits? The reason was plain. The Chancellor of the Exchequer knew that if the Motion was left to the judgment of Members on the Liberal Benches he would not get five Members to vote for the proposal of the Government. It was because he believed His Royal Highness was in a situation to maintain his present position, because he had ceased to owe any allegiance to this country; because there was not a single tittle of evidence brought forward to show that he had desired this grant, or had any real necessity for it, that, apart from the question of confidence in the Government, he (Mr. Dalziel) should vote for the Motion now before the House.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 298; Noes 67.—(Division List, No. 33.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Supply,—Committee upon Monday next.

INDIAN RAILWAY COMPANIES BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to enable Indian Railway Companies to pay Interest out of Capital."—(*Mr. H. H. Fowler.*)

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) asked whether the proposed power would be given to Indian Railway Companies under the conditions that were laid down by the Railway Commissioners in this country?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Practically, the Regulations are the same.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he thought the Government should consider that the Opposition were very considerate in allowing this Order to go through without a word of explanation, but they reserved this right to discuss the Bill on its subsequent stages.

***Sir J. W. PEASE** (Durham, Barnard Castle) objected to the principle of that portion of the Bill which permitted interest to be paid out of capital during construction of works.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. H. Fowler and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 184.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS ACCOMMODATION.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. T. E. Ellis, Merionethshire) moved—

"That a Select Committee be appointed 'to consider whether any, and what, arrangements can be made to improve the Accommodation provided for the Members and Officials of this House, and for the representatives of the Press:

That Mr. Buchanan, Lord Burghley, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Freeman-Mitford, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Sir James Joicey, Major Jones, Mr. Alpheus Morton, Mr. M'Donnell, Mr. David Plunket, Lord Stanley, Colonel Howard Vincent, and Sir Julian Goldsmid be Members of the Committee:

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records:

That Five be the quorum.'"

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether the Amendment he (Mr.

Conybeare) had put on the Paper would be accepted — namely, to insert after "Press" the words "and for strangers, including Ladies"?

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) said, that if the terms of Reference included an inquiry into the accommodation for ladies he should object.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Under the circumstances, it is unnecessary for me to give an answer, for whatever I say the Committee will be objected to. I will, therefore, leave the Reference, as it at present stands, to the consideration of hon. Members. I can only say that I am anxious to meet the convenience of hon. Members and the representatives of the Press, and I hope we shall be able to come to some conclusion in the matter.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I object.

Motion postponed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.—(No. 122.)

Read the third time, and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 3) BILL. (No. 115.)

Read the third time, and passed.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL BILL. (No. 8.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

CANAL TOLLS AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 1) CANALS OF GREAT NORTHERN AND OTHER RAILWAY COMPANIES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade, under "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," containing the Classification of Merchandise Traffic and the Schedule of Maximum Tolls and Charges applicable thereto, for the Canals of the Great Northern and certain other Railway Companies, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burt and Mr. Mundella.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 178.]

LEASEHOLDERS (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Bill to give facilities to Leaseholders for the purchase of the Fee Simple of their Holdings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Kearley, Mr. Frye, Mr. Brunner, and Mr. Field.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 179.]

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS PROSECUTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Storey, Bill for the abolition of Prosecutions for the expression of Opinion on matters of Religion, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Storey, Mr. Maden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Lloyd-George.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 180.]

SMALL TENANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Farquharson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land in Scotland by Small Tenants, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Buchanan Mr. Crombie, Captain Sinclair, and Mr. Wason.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 181.]

SEA FISHERIES REGULATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bill for the better regulation of the Sea Fisheries of Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Lord Elcho, and Mr. Shaw Stewart.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 182.]

LOCOMOTIVE THRESHING ENGINES BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Kennaway, Bill for removal of the restrictions on the use of Locomotive Engines for threshing purposes, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Kennaway, Sir William Walrond, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Wingfield-Digby, Mr. Lambert, and Mr. Round.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 183.]

PATENT AGENTS BILL.

The Select Committee on Patent Agents Bill was nominated of,—Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Broad, Mr. Alban Gibbs, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, Sir John Leng, Mr. Edward M'Hugh, Mr. Mather, Mr. Nussey, Mr. W. F. D. Smith, and Mr. Warmington.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 23rd April 1894.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Behring Sea Award.
2. Army (Annual).

NEW PEERS.

Stuart Rendel, Esquire, having been created Baron Rendel of Hatchlands in the County of Surrey—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

Sir Reginald Earle Welby, G.C.B., having been created Baron Welby of Allington in the County of Lincoln—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

TRUSTEE ACT, 1893, AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 20.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order.)

Clause 1.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell): My Lords, I have to propose some Amendments of a purely technical character, which I shall leave for Standing Committee. There are one or two which I propose to add there.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.

(No. 27.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*Lord BALFOUR: My Lords, I do not think your Lordships will have any difficulty in giving a Second Reading to this Bill. It is a very short one, and there is only one operative clause. The only object of it is to enable County Councils in Scotland to have the same privilege as County Councils have in England at the present time of subscribing to, and, if they see fit, paying the expenses of County Council Associations. There are some matters of difficulty with regard to the working of the Local Government Act, 1889, and to ordinary County Council administration, which, it is generally believed, will be more likely to be transacted in an amicable manner if the representatives of the various counties have an opportunity to meet and consider. A meeting, which was attended by representatives from nearly every County Council in Scotland, was held, in the course of January last, in Edinburgh, and one of the recommendations which was unanimously agreed to by that Conference was that such an Association as this should be formed and that the County Council should have power to pay a reasonable sum towards the expenses of managing it. This Bill has passed unanimously through the other House of Parliament, and I hope your Lordships will give it a Second Reading. I do not think there is any point of controversy in regard to it, and I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Balfour.*)

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord Tweedmouth): My Lords, the promoters of this Bill in another place consented to the proposals of the Government; the Government agreed to the measure being passed in the other House, and they hope that your Lordships will read the Bill a second time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

MURDER OF A CARETAKER IN COUNTY CORK.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY asked Her Majesty's Government whether they were in a position to furnish the House with information with regard to the brutal murder which had just taken place at Glenara, Co. Cork, of a caretaker, named James Donovan, as reported in this morning's papers?

The Earl of CORK said, being the owner of the estate on which the terrible murder had been committed, which no one deplored more than himself, he would give the noble Marquess the latest information he had received from his agent on the subject. That information he had received that morning, and it was to the effect that at the present moment no persons had been arrested on the charge; but the police had an idea that the murder had not been committed solely in consequence of the victim being employed as caretaker of an evicted farm, but in consequence of his having occupied himself lately in seizing cattle on other people's property, not his own (Lord Cork's), under the Sheriff's orders. He was happy to say this was the first bailiff who had ever been placed upon his property, but the tenant who was evicted owed him something like 10 years' rent, and before evicting the tenant his bailiff offered to compound the arrears for £10. Those circumstances were no palliation for the murder that had been committed. No one regretted it more than he did, and no one could use greater exertions than he would; he would do everything in his power to discover the perpetrators of that dreadful crime.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY was sure their Lordships would thank the noble Earl for having done his utmost to give them the details with regard to this, the latest, agrarian outrage in Ireland. At the same time the House was fully justified in asking for further details as they came to hand, as no doubt they would do. He gave notice that on Friday, April 27th, he would ask Her Majesty's Government for whatever information they possessed with regard to the murder of James Donovan, at Glenara, County Cork, and further whether they in any way attributed the murder to the recent speeches of their supporters denouncing the system of "land-grabbing," and whether in consideration of the evident effect of those speeches they would not reconsider their avowed purpose of repealing the only Act which was capable of dealing with agrarian crime in Ireland.

MARKING OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE.

The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be printed for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order. (No. 30.)

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Report from the Committee of Chairmen of the Standing Committee, That they have appointed the Viscount Cross Chairman of the Standing Committee read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 18.)

Read 2^a (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Moved, "That the Lord Monkswell be added to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill,"—(*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to; and a message ordered to be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to add one of their Members to the said Joint Committee for the consideration of the said Bill.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS (BETTERMENT).

The Lords following, were named of the Select Committee:

L. Tweedmouth (*L. Privy Seal*)
D. Norfolk
M. Salisbury
E. Denbigh
E. Onslow
L. Zouche of Haryngworth
L. Belper
L. Kenry. (*E. Dunraven and Mount-Earl.*)
L. Halsbury
L. Hobhouse
L. Lingen
L. Farrer.

The Committee to appoint their own Chairman.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 31.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 3) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 32.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 23rd April 1894.

ROYAL ASSENT.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—

The House went; and being returned;—

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to,—

1. Behring Sea Award Act, 1894.
2. Army (Annual) Act, 1894.

QUESTIONS.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS.

Colonel **HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that, under the American Immigration and Foreign Labour Law of the 3rd of March, 1893, the master and surgeon of every vessel carrying emigrants to America has to swear before the United States Consul at the port of departure full particulars as to the age, sex, and occupation of all emigrants carried in their ship, as well as other details with regard to their antecedents and present condition, and that the result has been that, of 7,637 brought during the past year before the Board of Special Inquiry, 1,653 were refused admission and sent back to England, at the expense of the Steamship Company conveying them, as unworthy of American citizenship; and if Her Majesty's Government will in future obtain more accurate information than is now furnished concerning the increasing augmentation from abroad of the labour competition in London and other great towns?

The **PRESIDENT** of the **BOARD** of **TRADE** (Mr. Mundella, Sheffield, Brightside); The United States Immigration Law of the 3rd of March, 1893, requires the master or first or second officer and the surgeon of every vessel carrying emigrants to the United States to verify on oath or affirmation before the United States Consul at the port of departure lists containing such particulars regarding the emigrants as are mentioned in the question. We have no Returns showing the number sent back in the past calendar year, but it appears that in the year ending June 30 last the number returned to all countries was 1,630, but from inquiries made of the Shipping Companies carrying emigrants from the United Kingdom to the States, it appears that only 340 were brought back to this country from all causes in the year 1893. The Labour Department are preparing a Report on the effect of alien immigration on the demand for labour. This is nearly ready.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.

Mr. **JACKS** (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he could, in order to add to the usefulness of *The Labour Gazette*, under the heading "Industrial Accidents," give the percentage of accidents to the number of persons employed, in addition to the figures already given?

Mr. **MUNDELLA**: The Board of Trade have no information as to how many persons are employed in factories and workshops, and consequently the percentages suggested by my hon. Friend cannot be given. Such particulars as are known are given in the introductory heading to the table, and will be found in this month's number of the *Gazette*, at page 123.

THE CASE OF SAXON, THE SAILOR.

Mr. **DARLING** (Deptford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been drawn to the case of S. Saxon, a seaman, who was pensioned on the 3rd of January, 1893, having been lent to the Japanese Navy from the 6th of March, 1890, to the 6th of August, 1891; whether this man became entitled to a pension on the 17th of January, 1891, and has repeatedly applied for pension due to him from the 6th of August, 1891, to the 24th of February, 1892, but, failing to get any answer from the Admiralty, continued to serve on board H.M.S. *Impérieuse* until the 3rd of January, 1893, when he was pensioned; whether he will be granted his pension as from the 6th of August, 1891, to the 24th of February, 1892, the time during which he was unemployed, he having re-entered the Navy on the latter date in order to exist while the

Admiralty considered his application for pension; and why his letters remained without answer?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee) (who replied) said: This case was carefully investigated in 1893, the result being that their Lordships allowed the man pay for the period 6th of August, 1891, to 23rd of February, 1892. This, of course, was more advantageous to the man than pension. A bill for the amount due (£33 10s.) was sent to H.M.S. *President*, in March, 1893, for delivery to Saxon, but was returned unpaid, as the man had been discharged to the shore and his address was unknown. As since that date no application was received in the Admiralty from the man, the money has not been paid over to him, but steps will now be taken to do this.

MR. DARLING: If the man's address is sent to the Admiralty, will the money be paid to him?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Certainly.

COUNTY DOWN SEA FISHERIES.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the last Return relating to the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, from which it appears that 266 tons of fish were in 1893 brought inland from Newcastle, County Down; whether, with the exception of Ardglass, which lies to the north-east of Dundrum Bay, on which Newcastle is situate, the quantity of fish sent inland from Newcastle last year was greater than that from any other fishing place in Ulster; whether he is aware that the Inspectors of Fisheries, in their Report for 1891, state that boats cannot get in or out of Newcastle Harbour without great risk and difficulty, and that the difficulty and danger have considerably increased since then; and whether, considering the number of lives already lost, the great risk to the fishermen still living there, and the wealth of fish in Dundrum Bay, he will send an engineer to inspect and report what, if anything, can be done in the matter?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I have no reason to question the statements in the first two paragraphs, though I am informed that the figures are for the Newcastle Coast Guard Division which includes Annalong, a much larger fishing port. The statement referred to in paragraph 3 is not that of the Inspectors of Fisheries, but, as I stated on the 21st of July last, is contained in a summary of Reports from Coast Guard officers, and is not ascribed to any one in particular. As I stated on the same date, there are no funds available for improving the harbour, and it could therefore only give rise to unfounded hopes if an engineer were sent down by the Board of Works. It appears to me that it is rather for the County Authorities to take action in the matter, if they see fit.

ASSAULT ON A COUNTY COURT BAILIFF AT PEMBRYN.

MR. GRIFFITH - BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any proceedings have yet been instituted against the men who assaulted Robert Lewis, the bailiff of the Newcastle Emlyn County Court, at Pembryn, on the 14th of March, and who he had stated were well known to the police; and, if not, why not; whether any notice of the sudden withdrawal of the police escort on the 16th of March was given by the Chief Constable to the bailiff till the actual morning of the 16th, when the bailiff had started on his duty; whether last week the Chief Constable refused to give Lewis an escort sufficient to protect his life, and in consequence no further attempts have been made to execute the 118th Order of the County Court still unexecuted; and whether he can take any steps to compel the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire to enforce the law?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): 1. Proceedings have been instituted by the bailiff. 2. Notice was given on the 16th of April not of immediate withdrawal, but that the escort would have to return to its station on the following night, the 17th. 3. The Chief Constable offered 10 men, to be under his own command, but the bailiff refused them. The Chief Constable considers such an escort adequate. 4. I have no reason to think that the Chief Constable is not taking the necessary steps to enforce the law.

STROKESTOWN AND ELPHIN POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he is aware that great local dissatisfaction exists regarding the postal arrangements of Strokestown and Elphin, which are considerable country towns in the County of Roscommon; that the town of Strokestown has got no benefit whatever from the accelerated mail service, because, though most of the correspondence is in the Dublin direction, the mail car proceeds in exactly the opposite route to Castlerea, thus losing two hours of time otherwise available for answering letters; and that Elphin has similar reason to complain of the existing defective arrangements; and will he, in deference to the strong local wishes on this subject, give his favourable consideration to a new arrangement by which the mail car shall leave Strokestown at 9 o'clock for the town of Roscommon, and the midday car from Longford to Strokestown be extended to Elphin; or, better still, a car run direct from Carrick-on-Shannon to that town?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): The question of rearranging the postal service to these places has been more than once considered, but, there being already a considerable loss to the Revenue, no improvement has hitherto been found practicable, except at an additional outlay, which was not considered to be warranted. I will consider the hon. Member's suggestion of a service *viâ* Roscommon or Carrick-on-Shannon and let him know the result; but I wish to point out that, as the existing day mail from Longford to Strokestown works in close connection with the Dublin mail, the hon. Member is under a misapprehension in stating that Strokestown has derived no benefit whatever from the accelerated mail service.

Mr. BODKIN intimated that he would forward to the right hon. Gentleman communications he had received on the subject.

THE ZANZIBAR PROTECTORATE.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Sultan of Zanzibar, in 1886, on the joint invitation of Great Britain and Germany, in adhering to the Berlin Act, specially reserved his fiscal rights under the first Article of that Act, and subsequently, in pursuance of that reservation, for a stipulated annual payment conceded the entire Customs Revenue so reserved of his territories within the British sphere of influence to a British Company; whether, acting on the advice of Her Majesty's Government subsequent to the declaration of a British Protectorate over his dominions, and to the exclusive advantage of that Protectorate if extended to the interior, the Sultan withdrew such reservation, on which the Company's contract of rent was based; whether any claim has been made against the Sultan in respect of the withdrawal above-mentioned, and whether it is correct, as stated in the Report issued to the shareholders of the Company on the 15th of February last, that the Company, in virtue of Article 7 of the Charter, sought the intervention of the Secretary of State on the 6th of October last, and again on the 16th of January 1893, and that the only reply so far has been a bare acknowledgment of those letters; whether the Directors of the Imperial British East Africa Company submitted an offer in June, 1893, to Her Majesty's Government for the re-absorption of the Company's concession and rights by the Sultanate; and whether Her Majesty's Government will inform the House, before the Uganda Debate takes place, of the terms of any arrangement come to with the Imperial British East Africa Company?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): It is not possible to make an adequate statement on the points raised in the first three paragraphs of the hon. Member's question within the limits of an answer to a question. It is the case that the Company submitted some time ago an offer to Her Majesty's Government such as is described in the last paragraph but one, but it was not possible to discuss the proposal till a decision had been come to respecting the future occupation of territory which the Company had evacuated. I am not able to say whether the communications with the Company will be sufficiently advanced to enable me to announce before the Debate that an arrangement had been come to.

GERMAN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that goods manufactured in German Prisons by prison labour at nominal wages are being exported to England, and sold in competition with English manufactures; whether he can obtain any information as to the amount and value of such importations, and their influence on the English trades affected; whether he can state the number of prisoners so employed in German prisons; and whether he will endeavour to obtain through the Foreign Office a Report on the character and extent of this competition?

Mr. MUNDELLA: We have been unable to obtain any evidence of the importation of goods manufactured in German prisons beyond the statements which have appeared in a trade newspaper; but steps are being taken to obtain through the Foreign Office all the information available on the subject.

THE BRITISH EAST AFRICA COMPANY.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state what proportion of the Customs Duties, referred to in the late Sir Gerald Portal's Report (page 33, paragraph 3) as accruing to the British East Africa Company, has been appropriated to the payment of rent to the Sultan of Zanzibar; and what other sources of revenue (tax or otherwise) have been or are available to the Company for the purposes of administration mentioned in that Report?

Sir E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government cannot give information as to the financial arrangements or resources of the Company.

RUNAWAY SLAVE SETTLEMENT ON THE JUBA RIVER.

Mr. ALBAN GIBBS (London): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the district of Gosha, lying on the right bank of the Juba River, which is occupied by an agricultural colony of runaway slaves numbering several thousand souls, forms part of the Protectorate transferred by Germany to Great Britain in 1890; whether the district in question is now part of the same Protectorate, or is included in the territory placed under the administration of the Sultan of Zanzibar along with Witu; and whether any, and if so what, measures have been taken since the territory was placed under the Sultan of Zanzibar to protect the people of Gosha from the lawless tribes of the country around, and to secure to them free access to the coast by the Juba River?

Sir E. GREY: With reference to the first paragraph, it is understood that a large settlement, composed in a great measure of runaway slaves, exists in territory in the interior near the Juba. That territory did not form part of the protectorate transferred by Germany to Great Britain in 1890. With reference to paragraphs 2 and 3, it is not included in the Protectorate which has been placed under the administration of the Sultan of Zanzibar, who has, consequently, not taken measures in regard to it. When the territory is explored and access to it opened information will be obtained as to these natives of whom little is known at present.

SHIPWRECK ON FILEY BRIGG.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the proceedings at an inquest held at Filey on the 13th of April to inquire into the deaths of certain persons at a shipwreck on Filey Brigg, when it was stated by the chief officer of the Coastguard that the bell buoy to warn vessels from this dangerous reef had been allowed to fall entirely out of order, and that there was no system of periodical inspection into its condition; and whether he will cause such a representation to be made to the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House who are responsible in the matter as will prevent this state of things in future?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have forwarded to the Trinity House a communication made to me by the Yorkshire coroner in the case of loss of life owing to the stranding of the *Chilian* on Filey Brigg, and the Elder Brethren informs me that they have given instructions for another bell buoy to be placed in lieu of the present one.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Will they give instructions that it shall be looked after properly?

MR. MUNDELLA: No doubt they will.

FREE SCHOOL BOOKS IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether in reply to an application by a parent for the use of books free of charge the head master of a Board school is justified in refusing the request, and in adding, "if your children don't get a proper supply of books they can't remain here"; and whether, considering the prevailing uncertainty on the subject, he will be good enough to state plainly what the rights of parents are (either by law or under the Rules of the Department) with respect to a free supply of school books?

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): At the same time, I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will state the Rules of the Scotch Education Department as to the right of children attending public schools to a free supply of books and stationery?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The reply quoted by the hon. Member is certainly not one which a teacher was justified in making on his own authority. If it represents a Rule laid down by a School Board, the Department would, in case of a reference to them, request an explanation, and would inquire into the circumstances under which such a Rule was imposed. If, in pursuance of such a Rule, children were excluded from a school, the legal point might easily be decided by a prosecution for non-attendance; and unless such prosecution were forthwith instituted, and the question thus decisively tested, the Department would not hold that the exclusion was justified under the Code, and would consequently refuse the grant. As I have already stated, the Department holds a proper supply of books (and I include in this stationery) to be a condition of efficiency, upon which payment of the Parliamentary grant depends; and also that a charge for the use of books is *inconsistent with relief of fees.* But it does not rest with the Department to give an authoritative ruling on legal points, other than those connected with administration which may arise under the Education Acts. An authoritative decision on such points can only be given by a Court of Law. This answer applies to the question of the hon. Baronet the Member for the College Division of Glasgow.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is the case that in schools in which books are thus provided free, the children are allowed to take them home and use them in the preparation of home lessons?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I am informed that in rural districts in Scotland, and especially in the Highlands, it is the prevailing custom. The Department, in granting or refusing the Parliamentary grant, takes into consideration the provision of books in these schools. It cannot go further than that.

INDIAN CANTONMENT REGULATIONS.

MR. STANSFELD (Halifax): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, with reference to the Indian Cantonment Regulations, whether the Despatch from India, mentioned in one of the telegrams that were read to the House by the Under Secretary of State on the 7th of November last, has been received; and what action has been taken upon it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Despatch to which my right hon. Friend refers was duly received and most carefully considered by Lord Kimberley in Council. In his reply, which was sent on the 1st March last, he informed the Government of India that, in his opinion, the only effective method of preventing a recurrence of any practices inconsistent with their Orders and with the Resolutions passed by the House of Commons on the 5th of June, 1888, was to proceed by means of legislation. He requested them accordingly to undertake the necessary legislation as soon as possible, and indicated the form in which he wished this to be effected. Further, to avoid the possibility of any future misconception of Orders, he requested the Government of India to issue a Resolution explaining the policy of that legislation, and prohibiting all practices, as distinguished from Rules or Regulations, inconsistent with that policy.

SIR R. TEMPLE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has noticed the Return presented by the Secretary for War to this House in January last, showing the dreadful increase in contagious diseases in several of the Presidencies of India?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Yes, Sir; a question on that subject was answered last week by the Secretary for War, who stated that this Return was engaging the consideration of both of us. There are explanatory circumstances which I need not refer to now, but which must be taken into consideration in dealing with the Return.

EXPERIMENTAL MOBILISATION OF EQUIPMENT AND STORE DEPÔTS.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of ordering during the present year an experimental mobilisation of the equipment and store depôts of the First Army Corps at Aldershot, Warley, or Colchester; and whether he will also consider the possibility of mobilising during the present year one or more of the Army Medical Staff Corps bearer companies attached to the First Army Corps?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): It is not considered advisable to have any special muster of the equipment of the First Army Corps; Reports are periodically furnished, so that we are well aware of its condition. As regards the Medical Staff Corps, arrangements have been made to train this summer at Aldershot four field hospitals and four bearer companies, and one of each at the Curragh. These units will be on a war footing both as regards men and equipment, and, except in respect of the number of horses, the process will be as near an approach to a mobilisation as can be made under existing conditions.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE COOTEHILL UNION.

MR. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board for Ireland have received the documents recently referred to by him from the Guardians of Cootehill Union; whether the Local Government Board are now aware that three-fifths of the elected Guardians are in favour of promoting a scheme for cottages and allotments in their respective constituencies, and do not object to the expense being made a divisional charge; whether the attention of the Local Government Board has been drawn by labourers interested to Reports of the Board's proceedings on the 12th of January and the 23rd of February in a local newspaper; and whether the Local Government Board now propose to order an inquiry?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The documents referred to have been received by the Local Government Board. The papers do not contain the information required by the second paragraph of the question. The Board have received a newspaper report of the Guardians' proceedings on the 12th of January, but not of the proceedings on the second mentioned date. The Board did not receive until the 21st instant the observations of the solicitor acting for the labourers, and the question of holding an inquiry is now under consideration.

THE IMPORTATION OF CANADIAN STORE CATTLE.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether representations have been made to him by many agriculturists in the Eastern Counties, both of England and Scotland, as to the exceptionally healthy and profitable character of Canadian store cattle; and whether, in view of the necessity for farmers being able to make their arrangements for the coming season, he can now state the result of the representations made to him by the Dominion Government of Canada with regard to the slaughtering of all Canadian cattle at the ports where they are landed?

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, with a view to allowing cattle feeders to make arrangements for the coming season, he will now state what course he is prepared to take with regard to the restrictions at present in force on the importation of Canadian cattle?

MR. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of

Agriculture whether he has received a copy of the resolution of the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, proposed by a veterinary surgeon and seconded by a large tenant farmer, stating that while extremely anxious to keep out all animals from the continent of Europe and from all countries where contagious diseases are likely to exist, they would heartily welcome the importation of Canadian store cattle, which have been found to be exceptionally healthy and profitable to the grazier; and whether he is prepared to allow the importation of such cattle for the benefit of graziers in the Eastern Counties of England?

MR. MAGUIRE (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in the months of May and June last, the lungs of cattle landed in this country from Canada were forwarded to the Board of Agriculture for examination by the Inspectors of the ports, who believed them to be affected with contagious pleuro-pneumonia; whether in three of these cases well-defined and typical signs of pleuro-pneumonia were apparent, and they were pronounced by the experts of the Board to be infected with the disease; whether he is aware that it was stated in evidence before the Departmental Committee of 1888 that cases had been known of the development of the disease after no less a period than 15 months; and whether, under these circumstances, and considering the length of frontier between Canada and districts where the disease is known to exist, the present restrictions which the slaughter of Canadian cattle at the port of debarkation is required will be maintained?

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the long term of incubation of the disease of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle, and the great difficulty in enforcing quarantine along the extended frontier between the United States and Canada, he can assure the farmers of Great Britain that the precautions taken by the Canadian Government are sufficient to secure them from the risk of this disease being introduced into this country by cattle from the United States (where it is admittedly prevalent) passing through the Canadian ports?

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, as the result of inquiries with reference to the presence of cattle disease in the Dominion of Canada, he has any reason to believe that there is any difficulty in enforcing Quarantine Regulations as between the Dominion and the United States, or any laxity in enforcing those Regulations; and whether the only access for cattle to the grazing lands of the Dominion is from Montana by three trails only, all converging upon and under the supervision of the North-West Mounted Police?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): Yes, Sir; I have received many representations from agriculturists in the Eastern Counties of Scotland as to the advantages attending the importation of Canadian store cattle, and I have also received the resolution to the same effect to which my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk refers in the question which stands in his name. Upon a most anxious review, however, of the whole sequence of events, I am forced, with much regret, to the conclusion that I should not be justified in restoring the privilege of free admission to Canadian cattle until I am in possession of the evidence which would be afforded by a further examination of the lungs of the animals slaughtered at the port of landing. The examination will not be of a protracted character, and if the result confirm the representations made to me concerning the absence of pleuro-pneumonia in Canada, and no adverse circumstances arise, I should then, I consider, be bound to dispense with slaughter at the port, although some temporary Regulations regarding the movement of animals after landing would probably be requisite, if confidence in the safety of the trade is to be restored. With regard to the question addressed to me by the hon. Member for County Down, I would say that the precautions taken by the Canadian Government to prevent the introduction of diseased animals into the Dominion from the United States were very materially strengthened early last year, as the hon. Member will see from No. 16 of the printed Papers on the subject; and if it were only necessary for me to consider the question of the admission of Canadian animals from this point of view, I should not hesitate to conclude that reasonable security against the introduction of diseased animals into Great Britain from Canada is afforded at the present time. What I have already said will afford a reply to the questions of my hon. Friend the Member for Kincardineshire, and the hon. Member for West Clare; and with regard to the question put to me by the hon. Member for Staffordshire, I would say that the facts and Regulations as to the admission of cattle from Canada into the United States are fully explained in a Report of the Canadian Privy Council included in the further Papers on this subject which I propose to lay on the Table forthwith.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Arising out of that answer I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman, who says that he proposes to institute an examination which is not to be of a protracted character, when that examination will begin, and how long the period of examination will continue; and if he decides to re-admit Canadian cattle without requiring slaughter at the port of debarcation, will he give such notice of his intention as will enable Parliament to express an opinion before the decision is finally adopted?

MR. H. GARDNER: With regard to the period of examination, that very materially depends upon the number of animals coming in from Canada. With regard to giving notice, I shall follow the usual course.

MR. CHAPLIN: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question. When will the examination commence?

MR. H. GARDNER: As a matter of fact, examinations are always going on. This is, however, a special examination, and it will begin as soon as the bulk of the animals begin to come in.

COLONEL WARING: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether contagious pleuro-pneumonia can be detected with certainty in the living animal; what is the longest known period of incubation of the disease; whether the disease has existed recently in Canada, and does it now exist in the United States?

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): Has the right hon. Gentleman received a resolution from the Central Chamber of Agriculture stating that the time has come when the introduction of live cattle into this country should not be permitted, except on very special conditions, without the slaughter of the animals at the port of debarcation?

MR. H. GARDNER: I have received the resolution, and I also received a deputation from the same body, to which I gave a reply.

MR. WHITELAW (Perth): May I ask whether, in the examination of these animals, a representative of the Canadian Government will be allowed to take part?

MR. H. GARDNER: The usual course will be followed.

COLONEL WARING: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my questions. If he has any objection to doing so I will put them down.

MR. H. GARDNER: The hon. Member will find all the information he requires in the Papers to be laid on the Table of the House, and which I hope will be circulated among hon. Members in the course of next week.

EVICTIONS ON LORD DILLON'S ESTATE.

MR. BODKIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the case of Patrick Webb, of Loughlin, recently evicted on Lord Dillon's estate; is he aware that 10 years ago Patrick Webb bought the interest of the outgoing tenant in the holding from which he has now been evicted, and, in addition to the price to the tenant, paid to the landlord nine years of arrears of rent then due on the said holding; that to this Patrick Webb further spent £500 in buildings and improvements on the holding with the full approval of the landlord, and that no rent was due to Lord Dillon at the date of the eviction, but that Patrick Webb was evicted for over-holding on the expiration of a 99 years' lease, the Land Commission, in spite of the protest of one of its members, refusing to fix a fair rent on the ground that the holding was residential in its character, under the Land Act of 1881, because the house was situate in a village of less than 140 inhabitants; and will he afford such facilities as the progress of public business will permit to render such cases impossible in the future?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that it is not the case that Webb has been evicted. An ejectment decree for overholding possession has, it is true, been obtained against him, but this has not yet been executed pending the result of legal proceedings taken by Webb against his landlord. With regard to the refusal of the Land Commission to fix a fair rent on the holding, I am informed that the ground on which the application was dismissed was that the holding was not an agricultural one. The case was re-heard by Land Commissioners in May, 1893, when the decision of the Sub-Commission was affirmed. Subsequently, the Commissioners gave liberty to the tenant to appeal to the Court of Appeal, but he appears to have taken no steps to prosecute the appeal.

REPORT OF THE GOLD AND SILVER COMMISSION.

SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that for a considerable time no copies of the Report of the Gold and Silver Commission have been obtainable, and that constant applications for it are being made both here and abroad, and whether, under these circumstances, he will give instructions for the Report to be reprinted: and whether it would be possible in such reprint to add a complete index of the valuable papers and tables appended to the Report, similar to that which appears at the end of the Report of the Indian Currency Committee?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I am informed that the first Report is now out of print, and the second almost out of print; but there is still a considerable stock of the final Report and its Appendices, which form the most interesting part of the volumes issued by the Commission. I doubt whether there is any very considerable demand for the first two volumes, which consist entirely of the "evidence" of witnesses; but, if any large demand arises, the question of reprinting shall be re-considered.

SIR W. HOULDSWORTH: Is it not possible to provide a complete index?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I should like to consider that question.

ASSIZE ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if Her Majesty's Judges have yet arrived at any understanding as to the proper course to be adopted by them at Assizes in reference to the trial of prisoners committed to the Sessions; and whether he can now issue any definite statement for the guidance of Magistrates in carrying out the provisions of the Assizes Relief Act?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The Lord Chancellor informs me that he has no information on the subject except what appears from the letter of the Lord Chief Justice of the 16th of February stating the view of himself and the great majority of the Judges; nor has he any authority over any Judge who may act on a different view. As to issuing any statement for the guidance of Magistrates, I have done all that it is in my power to do by the Circular Letter issued from the Home Office of January 8 last.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: I shall have to call attention to the subject on the Estimates.

FREE EDUCATION AT ATHERTON, LANCASHIRE.

MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that a demand has lately been made at Atherton, Lancashire, for free education; and where there is a demand for free education in any school district and such demand may be met by the transference of scholars from one school to another, whether the burden of supplying places should be apportioned to any one particular school provided that the scholars can obtain such education within a reasonable distance?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): Claims for free education for between 1,600 and 1,700 children have been made at Atherton, and are being dealt with in the usual way. In order that such claims may be met, the Department require that a free place shall be provided for each child claiming it at some school within a reasonable and convenient distance of the child's home.

In a district not under a School Board, the supply of such free places at the various schools which have the right to charge fees is a matter within the discretion of the managers. The Department cannot compel any such school to provide any free places at all; but if the free places claimed are not supplied by voluntary arrangement, it becomes the duty of the Department to order the formation of a School Board to supply the free places required.

UGANDA.

Mr. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is the case, as stated in Sir Gerald Portal's Report (page 33, paragraph 5), that the Imperial British East Africa Company made Treaties in Uganda and the neighbouring countries promising protection in return for certain commercial advantages; if so, are such Treaties a violation of Clause 16 of the Company's Charter, prohibiting any monopoly of trade; whether, in accordance with Clause 3 of the Charter, the Treaties in question have received the approval of Her Majesty's Secretary of State; and whether Copies of the Treaties will be laid upon the Table of the House before the Debate on Uganda?

Sir E. GREY (who replied) said: I must ask to be allowed to postpone any statement on this question until the Debate comes on.

STAMP DEEDS.

Mr. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the number of offices in England in which instruments and counterparts can be stamped?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The die denoting that the full and proper duty has been paid on the original deeds is only impressed in the London, Edinburgh, and Dublin stamp offices. Belfast already enjoys the utmost facilities that have been given to Liverpool, Manchester, and Bristol, and to those places only, with respect to the transmission of counterparts to the central office.

KILLARNEY UNION.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is true, as stated by the Local Government Inspector, that whilst the liabilities of the Killarney Union amount to £5,652, the Guardians have only £565 to their credit in the bank; whether unpaid cheques to the amount of £2,183 have been issued, and that bills amounting to £1,590 are due; and if, in view of the serious financial state of the Union, he will dismiss the Guardians and appoint Vice Guardians?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The figures given in the question represent with substantial accuracy the financial condition of this Union on the 11th inst., when the Inspector made his statement to the Guardians, which was duly reported in the public Press. As regards the conclusion of the question, I can only say at present that the matter is engaging my careful consideration.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Did not a similar state of affairs prevail some time ago in the Tralee Union?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is quite true that in consequence of the financial condition of the Tralee Union the elected Guardians were suspended and Vice Guardians appointed, and the result has been satisfactory.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether there is anything very extraordinary in an excess of the liabilities over the assets at a time when the proceeds of the old rate are exhausted, and the collection of the new rate began?

Mr. J. MORLEY: There is nothing extraordinary in the matter as I understand, and I hope the Killarney Guardians will soon be able to put themselves in order.

Sir T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): Is it not a fact that the elected Guardians are now administering in Tralee Union?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes, it is true that the Vice Guardians have done their work, and that the elected Guardians are now doing duty.

Mr. BODKIN: Is it not a fact that the Vice Guardians are paid Guardians; if so, what is their salary, and does the right hon. Gentleman consider that it tends to lighten the deficit by appointing Vice Guardians, who are paid a salary, thereby putting an additional burden on the ratepayers?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Is it usual for these Unions to issue cheques for £2,000 which are afterwards dishonoured by the bank?

Mr. MORLEY: I am afraid that such proceedings are not entirely unusual.

Mr. BODKIN: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer my question?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say offhand what are the salaries of the Vice Guardians. It appears that in some cases they have reduced the debt.

WOMEN IN INDIAN COAL MINES.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he has received any Report from the Inspector relating to the employment of women in coal mines in India; and, if not, when we may expect it?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: The Inspector's Report upon Coal Mines has not yet been received. The Government of India hope to receive his first Report in July next, and they will send it home soon after.

Sir J. GORST (Cambridge University): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the meantime, and pending the presentation of the Report, any steps will be taken to put a stop to the employment of women underground in coal mines?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I must ask for notice of that question.

GALWAY EXTRA POLICE FORCE.

Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the number of extra police in the County of Galway in connection with the Clanricarde estate in 1893, compared with the year 1885, and the cost of maintaining same; and if he will state the number and cost of extra police on the estate since 1885?

Mr. J. MORLEY: In 1885 the number of extra police employed in connection with this estate was four, at an annual cost of £276. In December, 1893, the number so employed was 29, and the annual cost £1,999. Between 1885 and the 1st of January last the number of extra police employed on the estate averaged 23, at a total cost, as near as can be estimated, of £14,520.

CANADIAN TEA DUTIES.

Mr. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state what the intentions of the Canadian Government are with reference to the alteration of the Tea Duties; whether teas blended in bond in Great Britain will be subject to any and what duty in the new tariff; and whether the Canadian Government can legally differentiate against this country and home labour in favour of China and other tea-exporting countries.

Sir R. HANSON (London): May I at the same time put to the hon. Gentleman a question on the same subject which I have had on the Paper on two days previously, but which has unfortunately not appeared to-day?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. S. Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am much obliged to my hon. Friends for having postponed these questions. We received on Saturday the following telegram explanatory of the proposal in regard to tea in the new Canadian tariff:—

"Duties proposed in Canadian House of Commons as to tea and coffee are expressed in following extract from tariff. Extract begins: 'Tea and green coffee imported directly from the country of growth and production, free. This item shall include tea and coffee purchased in bond in any country where tea and coffee are subject to Customs Duties, provided there be satisfactory proof that the tea or coffee so purchased in bond is such as might be entered for home consumption in the country where the same is purchased.' Extract ends. The above item is, of course, subject to amendment by the Canadian Parliament. Despatch follows by mail."

I trust that this explanation will be satisfactory to my hon. Friends and to the trade.

IRISH CHURCH SURPLUS FUNDS.

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will lay upon the Table a Return showing whether there is an available balance of securities remaining among the Irish Church Surplus Funds sufficient to guarantee a Treasury loan; and, if so, to what amount of loan; and, if he will show in detail all the liabilities which have been imposed on the Irish Church Surplus Funds?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: A Return is being prepared, and I hope to be able to lay it on the Table in a few days.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: In the form I ask?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Yes.

UGANDA.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the indefinite postponement of the Debate on the Settlement of Uganda, he can now make a further statement as to the intention of the Government as to the exact area over which Imperial administration is to prevail, as to the railway, and means of communication with Uganda suggested by Sir G. Portal's Report, and as to the abolition of the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar?

Sir E. GREY: In answer to this and other questions, I have to say that it is not possible to deal with these matters in the compass of an answer to a question, and I must reserve the explanations upon them until the Debate, when a full statement will be made on this and other points.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will be good enough to consider whether it would not make the discussion much more valuable if the House had some intimation beforehand as to the decision of the Government with regard to the main points of interest connected with the subject?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I will tell the right hon. Gentleman at once what our position is. As soon as ever we can make arrangements after the conclusion of the Debate on the Motion for the appointment of the Scotch Grand Committee, I will endeavour to fix the Debate on Uganda on as early a day as possible, when I will make a statement on the subject.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: When the Debate comes on, and after the statement has been made by the right hon. Gentleman, will the right hon. Gentleman allow the Debate to be adjourned in order to enable the House to consider that statement?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I would rather postpone my answer to that question.

Sir J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman place the House in possession of the facts of what the Government proposed to do with the money asked for in the Estimate? That Estimate refers to particulars, but gives none. Do the Government propose in the Estimate to take any sum for improved communication either by railway or road, or the tracts referred to in the Report, which are often circuitous because they are uncleared and go through swamps?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Vote is a formal one intended for the purpose of raising a discussion only, and does not profess to give particulars at all.

Sir J. FERGUSSON: The Estimate says there are particulars.

Sir W. HARCOURT: No definite statement as to details can conveniently be made at the present time.

THE IMPORTATION OF GERMAN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has received any communication from the Board of Trade with reference to the importation into the United Kingdom of German prison-made goods; and what steps, if any, have been taken in the matter; and if the Secretary of State will cause inquiries to be made concerning this traffic of Her Majesty's Consuls in Germany, and particularly of those in Berlin and Cologne?

Sir E. GREY: A communication has been received, and Her Majesty's Ambassador in Germany is being instructed to furnish a general Report on the subject.

Colonel H. VINCENT: When will the Report be laid upon the Table of the House?

Sir E. GREY: I cannot exactly say.

THE BUDGET AND THE NAVAL DEFENCE FUND.

Lord G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty if the £289,000, described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as money which has been paid over to the Naval Defence Account in excess of the authorised expenditure of £10,000,000, is the proceeds of advances made by the Treasury previous to the commencement of the present financial year from the Consolidated Fund, under Section 2 of "The Naval Defence Act, 1889"; and, if not, from what source, and under what authority, has this money been obtained?

Sir W. HARCOURT (who replied) said: The origin of the transaction is that money was wanted and was advanced by the Treasury under the Naval Defence Act.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Is not the result of the transaction this: that the National Debt has been increased by the sum of £289,000 in order that the Revenue for that year might apparently be increased by that amount, although that amount does not properly belong to the Revenue for that year?

***Sir W. HARCOURT**: This is one of the beautiful conundrums in finance which arise out of the National Defence Act. It would take anybody two days to understand how the matter arose, and half a day for him to explain the matter. It arose in this way: £3,146,000 was borrowed from the Treasury on this account two years ago under the Statute, and the Treasury were bound this last year to pay over £1,429,000, which was more than was wanted, and the consequence is that the money, not being required to pay off the loan, is available to be restored to the Exchequer. I do not know whether that is intelligible to anybody, as it is barely intelligible to me.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I beg to give notice that I shall oppose the Resolution, and I think that I shall be able in a few minutes to make it clear to the House what is the nature of the transaction.

REPORTED DISTURBANCE IN BECHUANALAND.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give any further information as to a reported attack by Namaques on Bechuanas, resulting in the slaughter of many natives, men, women, and children, and also of some whites; and whether or no these Namaques belong to the German sphere of influence or protectorate?

***Mr. S. BUXTON**: The Secretary of State is inquiring into the matter, about which we have no official information.

EMPLOYMENT FOR EX-SOLDIERS.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state what is the number of non-commissioned officers and men at home stations employed on other than strictly military duties, and struck off the ordinary duty roster; whether, at the date of the Report of the Wantage Committee, they numbered no less than 13,000; and whether the practice as to employed men, described by Sir A. Haliburton as a legacy from the long service system, has been modified; and, if so, in what manner, since the Wantage Committee reported two years ago?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Proposals dealing with this subject are now under consideration. The number of soldiers employed on duties which are not strictly military cannot be stated without a reference to the General Officers commanding in the several districts.

Mr. HANBURY: But is it not a fact that at the date of the Report of the Wantage Committee the number was 13,000?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That may have been so.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration the desirability of employing first-class Army Reserve men?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The whole question is under consideration.

KENMARE POOR LAW GUARDIANS' ELECTION.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board have yet held an inquiry into the proceedings in connection with the election of Poor Law Guardians in the Kenmare Union; and whether the alleged irregular and illegal conduct of the chairman, on the occasion of the election of chairman, will also be inquired into?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Board on the 16th instant instructed their Inspector to hold a sworn inquiry into this matter, and the investigation will take place at the earliest possible date. The matter referred to in the second paragraph has already formed the subject of inquiry by the Local Government Board, who do not think that it calls for further interference on their part.

NEW PARISH BOUNDARIES.

Mr. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what will be the latest possible date for the arrangement of the boundaries under "The Local Government Act, 1894," if the Government proposals for deferring the date of the elections of Parish and District Councils are adopted?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): It will be seen from Section 84 (3) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1894, that the 30th of August in the present year is the date before which the re-arrangement of boundaries must be completed. The Bill before the House for accelerating the registration makes no alteration in this respect.

CHILDREN IN LONDON PRISONS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a statement published in the Press by Mr. William Wheatley, that on the 19th instant he found two children undergoing a sentence of five days' imprisonment in Pentonville Prison, and that one of the children said he would be 11 next birthday, but did not look more than eight, and the other stated that he would be 13 next birthday, but did not look more than nine; for what offence, from what Court, and by what Magistrate were these children committed; and whether the committal to prison was reported to the Home Office?

Mr. ASQUITH: The boys referred to were sentenced at the Marlborough Street Police Court by Mr. Hannay to a fine of 5s., or five days' imprisonment, for throwing bricks and stones from a partly demolished building in Nassau Street, at passengers in the street, about which practice many complaints had been made to the police. There were four boys in all; one over 14 was remanded for a week, and the three others were fined 5s. each or five days. Only one of the three fines was paid; the parents of two of the boys, Baker and Smith, wishing them to be taught a lesson, refused to pay the fines, saying that they could do nothing with their boys. The Governor of Pentonville informs me that the boys were treated in the ordinary way in cells set apart for juveniles. The matter was reported to the Home Office.

LONDON PRISON ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is now able to state what questions (in addition to the accommodation in London prisons) will be referred to the proposed Departmental Committee of Inquiry into our prison system?

Mr. ASQUITH: No; I am not at present in a position to give my hon. Friend the information he asks.

CLOGHER VALLEY TRAMWAY,

Mr. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that engine-drivers in the employment of the Clogher Valley Tramway Company are obliged to work 12 hours daily, and occasionally 17 hours a day; and that on a recent occasion an engine-driver worked on the line for 36 hours without rest; and will he have inquiry made into the conditions and hours of labour of engine-drivers, milesmen, and lamp-lighters in the employ of this Company?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have made inquiry, and the Company inform the Board of Trade that their engine-drivers work 60 hours per week of six days; that there are no Sunday trains; they add that in case of breakdown the hours may have been longer, but they do not admit the long hours referred to by the hon. Member.

Mr. M'GILLIGAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have made inquiries, and I have given the hon. Member the result. If the hon. Member has particulars of any specific cases, and will lay them before me, I will inquire further.

VEHICULAR LIGHTING AT NIGHT-TIME.

Mr. MOUNT (Berks, Newbury): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether a County Council has power to pass a bye-law requiring every vehicle drawn by any animal in that county between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise to have a lighted lamp attached to that vehicle?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Secretary of State has held that such a bye-law may be made under Section 16 of the Local Government Act, 1888, provided its terms are reasonable. The matter is one which has been considered to fall within the words "good rule and government" of a county. Monmouthshire is a county where such a bye-law is in force.

SALMON FISHING IN THE RIVER SLANEY.

Mr. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the rod fishermen are allowed the privilege of fishing for salmon in the River Slaney six weeks previous to the time alloted to the net fishermen; whether a like custom is prevalent on all the rivers in Ireland where salmon are taken; and whether he can take any steps to assimilate the times for the beginning of net and rod fishing?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand the fact is as stated in the first paragraph. The difference between the dates on which net fishing and angling commence depends on local circumstances, and the Inspectors of Fisheries are of opinion that the interests of the salmon fisheries would not admit of the assimilation of dates for the commencement of net and rod fishing.

THE REVISED EDUCATION CODE.

Sir F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when the Revised Code relating to evening schools will be printed and circulated; and when the same will come into operation?

Mr. ACLAND: The Evening School Code will be printed and circulated very shortly. It contains a provision making it apply to all schools, the grants to which fall due after the 30th of April, 1894, which is the end of the school-year for evening schools; practically, therefore, it affects but few schools until they begin their new session next winter. I will undertake that plenty of time shall be given for the consideration of the few changes which have been made from last year's Code.

Sir F. S. POWELL: When will the Code become law?

Mr. ACLAND: Practically it will not take effect until next autumn.

Sir F. S. POWELL: But when will it become law?

Mr. ACLAND: It was laid on the Table at the end of last month. It becomes law a month from the date of so laying it.

PHŒNIX PARK GRAZINGS.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Board of Works intend to re-establish the old system of letting the grazing in Phœnix Park to different owners of cattle, now that the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council have stated in reply to the Dublin Cowkeepers' Association that there was no hindrance to their cattle being grazed upon the park?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: In consequence of the withdrawal by the Veterinary Department of the objection to the admission of grazing cattle to the Phœnix Park the Board of Works decided to invite tenders for the grazing of the park by cattle the property of one owner, and that, if no such tender were made, applications from owners irrespective of numbers should be received. No tenders came in, and accordingly the old practice is being reverted to.

BIRKENHEAD GUARDIANS AND THE NATIONAL DOCK LABOURERS' UNION.

Mr. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the refusal of the medical officer of the Birkenhead Board of Guardians to grant sick certificates to members of the National Dock Labourers' Union who were unable to pay for the same, with the result that they are deprived of the sick allowance from that organisation; and whether medical officers of such Boards are justified in their refusal to grant such certificates?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I am informed by the Guardians of the Birkenhead Union that application was made to them by the Branch Secretary of the Dock Labourers' Union to direct the medical officer of the workhouse to give to members of that organisation who with the stock of a gun. Is it true, as reported in some of the papers, that he was also shot?

Mr. J. MORLEY: My report is that he was beaten on the head with a gun as he lay in bed, and afterwards dragged into the yard and beaten again. I have no information as to his having been shot.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether this is one of those cases in relation to an evicted farm where an evicted tenant would be restored under the Evicted Tenants' Bill?

[No answer was given.]

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): May I ask whether, until last Sunday, there had been any agrarian murder in the district for 23 months, the period of the right hon. Gentleman's administration in Ireland?

Mr. CARSON: Was there not a deplorable outrage only last week?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The last two questions are entirely outside the question upon the Paper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I have understood that it will be for the convenience of the House to deal in the following manner with these Resolutions. I understand that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to have some further explanation of the first Resolution, but that, having had that explanation, they desire that the discussion upon it should be postponed until to-morrow. I will, therefore, now move formally the first Resolution, relating to the Estate Duty, and I will then renew it again to-morrow. I may point out to the Committee that it is of the greatest consequence that the Bill should be brought forward as well as the Income Tax Resolutions, so that there should be authority from the House to levy the Income Tax at the proposed increased rate. That being done, to-morrow will be free for the discussion on the Estate Duty. I do not know that I can add very much to the statement I have already made. It is impossible to understand the question until you have before you the clauses which deal in detail with this matter, and when you have seen the Bill you will find that the plans of the Government are comparatively simple. There is a good deal in the machinery clauses which cannot be avoided in cases of this kind; but the enacting clause provides that the existing Probate, Account, Estate, and additional Succession Duties shall cease to exist, and in their place there will be a new Estate Duty, levied upon the principal value of all property which passes on the death of the deceased, whether real or personal, settled or unsettled, and the principal value having been taken, the duty will be graduated according to the scale set forth in the Resolution. Property passing on the death of the deceased may be of different kinds. Of course, I am not now speaking of realty and personalty. The first property which will be dealt with is property of which the deceased is competent at the time of his death to dispose. That includes for the first time foreign property belonging to persons domiciled in the United Kingdom. Such property is at present subject to Legacy Duty. The second class of property dealt with under the present tax is property which the deceased has himself settled in his lifetime—that is to say, property not at his disposal at the time of his death. It will also include all those classes of gifts which are now taxable under the Account Duty such as *donatio mortis causâ*—voluntary gifts made within 12 months of death, life insurances, and other things now chargeable under the Account Duty. At present the Account Duty applies only to voluntary settlements. Hereafter the principle of the Account Duty will be applied to all settlements, whether voluntary or for consideration. I come to another class of property in which, by the disposition of some other person, the deceased had only a life interest—that is to say, a settlement made by A upon B, but which property passes from B's family upon B's death. That property will pay Estate Duty, but it will be treated for the purposes of graduating the duty in a different manner from property settled by the deceased himself. These are the three main classes of property which will become the subject of the proposed Estate Duty, and all these several kinds of property, taken upon their principal value, will be treated as one estate for the purpose of determining the graduated rate. That is to say, if a man has £50,000 in personalty and £50,000 in realty, settled or unsettled, they will be put together and treated as one estate for the determination of the graduated rate to be placed upon them, except when the property, settled by the disposition of some other person than the deceased, passes away from the descendants or the family of the deceased to some other person, in which case it will not be valued with his own property for the purposes of graduation. Therefore, that £100,000 will under those circumstances pay the Estate Duty at the rate belonging to £100,000, but will not pay more, because there may be another £50,000 passing away from the deceased at his death, but not to his own family.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether by "family" he means lineal descendants?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will give further details on that point to-morrow. We now come to the question of settlement, which is the most difficult matter in the Bill. A settlement covers several lives, but at present Probate Duty is paid only once on property settled by will. The question we have to consider is this: What principle shall we apply to settlements by will or otherwise? Will you allow one payment to cover settlement, or will you take, as in cases where there are no settlements, full payment on every death? Take the case of property in connection with which there is no settlement. The property goes to A, and he pays full duty; it then goes to B, his brother, and he pays full duty; then it goes by will to C, and he pays full duty likewise. In this case A, B, and C have free disposal of the property, whereas if the property were settled each would only have a life interest. Therefore, after much reflection, I have come to the conclusion that we ought to follow the principle now in force under the Probate Duty, and allow one payment to cover the settlement. Some people think that is a very great sacrifice, because of the number of lives in the settlement. You may have a number of lives, but you can only have one generation. It may well be that a young life in free testacy may cover a longer period than all the lives in the settlement, and therefore it is not certain that in every case a settlement will cover more than a single life, but on the whole and on the average there might be a loss. We cannot estimate exactly what that loss will be, but, following the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, we propose, as I mentioned in my Budget statement, that an additional 1 per cent. shall be placed upon settlements, to cover the average loss arising through one of those circumstances. If this percentage is found to be too much it will be discontinued; if it is found to be too little, it may be increased. A question has been suggested to me by my right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean: "What are you going to do in cases where Probate Duty has been paid upon a death occurring before the passing of the Bill?" We have considered it only fair to allow that duty to cover the settlement, and not to require payment of the new Estate Duty in respect of it. Now, I should like to say a word or two upon small estates under £1,000. That is a very material question under this Bill. At present these estates in the case of personalty pay both Probate and Legacy Duty. In the case of realty they pay only Succession Duty. In future they will only pay Estate Duty, and, generally speaking, the charge on them will be less than it is at present. I need not repeat what I have already said on that matter. I went into it in my Budget speech. I have been asked as to the mode of valuation. I would remind all hon. Gentlemen who must be familiar with the practice in these matters that the first valuer in all these matters is the successor himself. I know the ordinary practice, having had to do with a great many deeds of administration—because when a man has the misfortune to belong to the Bar his family always insist on making him executor and trustee, and therefore he becomes familiar with the administration of estates. In 99 cases out of 100 what happens is this: The executor sends for the most respectable and well-known surveyor in the neighbourhood and tells him to value the property. If it is a question of plate, he sends for the most respected and eminent silversmith in London, and in the case of jewels he does the same thing; and I can say from my knowledge and from information received from the Inland Revenue that in the far greater number of cases the valuation is accepted, unless there is some reason to believe that it is outrageously inadequate and improper. That is the first system of valuation. People are in most cases their own valuers.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): What about works of art?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I know that works of art, when valued to the nation, are very often valued at a very high price indeed, and I should be extremely happy if works of art were always valued on that scale. I believe the result to the Exchequer would be far greater than it is at the present time. I say the parties themselves are, generally speaking, the first valuers. It is not the interest or the policy of the Department to extract the uttermost farthing, and they do not do so. Any moderate and fair valuation is taken and accepted by the Inland Revenue. There are cases which would astonish the Committee if I told them the valuation that has been made. I would ask the Committee to consider the disadvantage of what some people, I know, favour, and that is establishing a fixed rule of valuation. In the first place, under the existing system, especially with regard to land, the annual value is taken. The proposal of the Government is that the Commissioners shall take methods, subject to appeal to the Court, as they think best to ascertain the value. They will not exclude annual value as one of the methods for arriving at principal value; but I think that the more discretion that is left to the Commissioners as to the method of ascertaining the value of any commodity the wiser will it be. One hears some people talk as if there were difficulties in ascertaining principal value. Principal value was introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite; and for five years the Estate Duty has been paid on principal value in certain cases, and there has been no difficulty whatever. Principal value has for a long time been the system of valuation in connection with leaseholds, and I would ask gentlemen who say there is great difficulty in ascertaining the principal value of freeholds why there should be more difficulty in their case than in the case of leaseholds? The right hon. Gentleman opposite was driven into arriving at principal value by capitalising the rent on certain tables; but I would point out to gentlemen interested in the land that that is a principle extremely to the disadvantage of properties falling in value and to the advantage of properties rising in value. Therefore it is the worst of all principles to be adopted. In future the charge will be upon the capital value, not on the capitalised rent, and will therefore be juster as between different kinds of landed property than it is at present. Properties of great prospective value will pay on a much larger figure, and properties with a less bright future may, in a good many cases, pay on a lower figure than they do at present. Any attempt to lay down a hard-and-fast principle of valuation would in my opinion be impracticable. It would lead to injustice to properties which have the poorest outlook. Any fixed number of years' purchase, not too low for the State to accept, would be far too high for these distressed properties to bear. But the State ought not to accept 20 or 24 years' purchase on property like that near London. It is worth more. Why should you fix too low a standard on the most valuable property, and consequently oppress properties less able to bear it? Surely it is far better to endeavour in each case to assess the tax upon the value which really pertains to the property. I venture to ask the Committee to consider this matter, because I know it occupies a great deal of attention, especially amongst those interested in land. I ask the House to consider what I have said in regard to leaseholds and the Estate Duty, and to bear in mind that where this has been in practical operation there has been no real ground of complaint. Now, I pass to another subject, also of great interest to the owners of real property, and that is how the money is to be raised. First of all, as I have said already, I have reserved the eight years' instalments in order not to force a sale. I have taken the length of time given by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. But the money will have to be raised in some form or another if it is not paid off in these yearly instalments. The life tenant will have power to charge the estate. He will have power in respect of this duty to make a mortgage on the estate, and if he prefers to pay it out of his pocket, he will himself be in the position of a mortgagee. It is said, "How are you to borrow money at all in the case of heavily mortgaged estates?" People do not bear in mind that the charge will only be on what remains after you have deducted the mortgage. That will be the margin and the residue upon which the charge will be made.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Will the charge take precedence of existing mortgages?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Existing mortgages, no. Subsequent mortgages, yes. The State does not claim to take precedence of existing mortgages. There will be further assistance which we propose to give in reference to the raising of the money, and that is that any money out of the settled funds may be employed for the purpose of paying this charge. That is all I have to say about the Estate Duty. I come now to the Succession Duty. I find that, oddly enough, in the public mind there is a want of appreciation of the fact that there have always been two kinds of Death Duties payable. I now refer to the second class of these duties. These are the Legacy and Succession Duties. The Legacy Duty is paid in all events by the individual to whom the property comes. The Legacy and Succession Duties are subject to the consanguinity scale. The Legacy Duty under the Bill will remain entirely unchanged. The Succession Duty will be payable as now, except—and it is a large exception—in the case of lineals, who will be exempt. It will be levied at the old rates, before the additions of 1½ and ½ per cent. made by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen). We go back to the old rates of Succession Duty. Where the successor takes an absolute interest, this duty will in future be payable on the principal value, and not upon the life interest as at present. That, of course, is a great change, and will put it upon precisely the same footing as the Legacy Duty. It will be a charge upon the property, and it will not lapse with the life of the person liable, and it will carry interest on the unpaid instalments. With these changes, the Legacy and Succession Duties will become practically identical. You will have the Estate Duty levied like what I may call an enlarged and universal Probate Duty upon all classes of property, and you will have an identical Legacy and Succession Duty, charged practically, as in the present Legacy Duty, upon the beneficiaries of the property. These are changes which, I admit, are of large character, but simple in their plan.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): As to the Succession Duty payable by a person who succeeds to a life estate, that will only be on the value of the life estate. In that case would not the Succession Duty lapse with the life estate?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Yes. Great interest is attached to the question, how will these changes affect the relation between the charges upon personalty and upon realty? I will give the House some important figures. At present the total yield of the Death Duties of all kinds is, in round numbers, £10,000,000. Of that at present £8,900,000—I may say £9,000,000—is paid by personalty, and £1,150,000 is paid by realty. And mark, when I say realty I am not speaking of agricultural land; I am speaking of land and freehold houses throughout the country. You may say, therefore, that at present the land and freehold houses—the realty of the country—pay a little more than one-tenth of the Death Duty. Personalty under Probate pays now £4,800,000; the Estate Duty, £1,130,000; Legacy Duty, £2,720,000; Succession Duty, £260,000 — total, £8,910,000. Now we go to realty. Probate Duty, nothing; Estate Duty, £110,000; Legacy Duty, nothing; Succession Duty, £1,040,000—altogether, £1,150,000, as against £8,910,000 for personalty.

Mr. BRODRICK: What is the capital value?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I should rather advise the hon. Gentleman not to pursue that inquiry. I will now state how the case will stand on the plan proposed by the Government. By our plan the total yield of the Death Duties will be £13,500,000 as against £10,000,000 at present.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH : This year?

SIR W. HARCOURT : No; I am speaking of the final result. Of that, personalty will pay £11,000,000; and realty, land and houses, £2,500,000. That is to say, that under the plan of the Government the increase of the Death Duties upon personalty will be £2,130,000, and upon realty £1,320,000—total increase, about £3,500,000. That is not all. I have shown that the additional charge upon realty under this plan will be £1,300,000. Of that, less than one-half will fall upon agricultural land—that is to say, as far as we can calculate, the additional charge upon agricultural land will be about £600,000. But for that total of £1,300,000 put upon realty we have given a compensation under Schedule "A" of the Income Tax amounting to £600,000 applicable to realty. I ought to tell the Committee that the total allowance under Schedule "A" is £800,000, but of that at least £200,000 will go to leaseholds, which are reckoned as personalty, and, therefore, what has to be deducted from the charge upon realty is £600,000. Now, that will leave the net additional charge imposed by the Budget, upon all realty, including agricultural land and land and houses, at £700,000. Of this sum £350,000 or £400,000 is asked of the landed interest of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland as their contribution towards the cost of the defence of this country, and also as a means of placing taxation on an equitable basis. I see to-night that a right hon. Gentleman goes down into the country, and says that it will be the ruin of his ancestral home, and that henceforth the County of Kent will grow thistles instead of strawberries. I hope that such will not be the result of proposals of this character. I confess that when I come to examine these Resolutions I am astonished at the moderation of the change that is made by them. I hope that this statement of mine will tend to re-assure those who have been alarmed by the rumours that have been put forward that we are going to inflict universal ruin upon the landed interest of this country. I think it will be some satisfaction to them that an act of justice which has long been desired—that of placing all property on an equal footing—can be accomplished at so small a cost and by placing so small a burden upon those who are asked to bear it.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Estate Duty.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty, in the case of every person dying on or after the first day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, upon the principal value of the property, real or personal, settled or not settled, which passes, or is to be deemed to pass, on or with reference to his death, a Duty at the graduated rates following (that is to say):—

Where the principal value—			At the rate for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100, of—
Exceeds	£100, and does not exceed	£500 -	One pound.
„	£500, „ „	£1,000 -	Two pounds.
„	£1,000, „ „	£10,000 -	Three pounds.
„	£10,000, „ „	£25,000 -	Four pounds.
„	£25,000, „ „	£50,000 -	Four pounds and ten shillings.
„	£50,000, „ „	£75,000 -	Five pounds.
„	£75,000, „ „	£100,000 -	Five pounds and ten shillings.
„	£100,000, „ „	£150,000 -	Six pounds.
„	£150,000, „ „	£250,000 -	Six pounds and ten shillings.
„	£250,000, „ „	£500,000 -	Seven pounds.
„	£500,000, „ „	£1,000,000 -	Seven pounds and ten shillings.
„	£1,000,000, - - -	- - -	Eight pounds.

And, where property subject to Duty at the graduated rates to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution is settled, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty upon the principal value thereof a further Duty of one pound for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100.

In respect of property chargeable with Duty to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution there shall not be levied the Duties following (that is to say):—

1. The Stamp Duties imposed by 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' on the affidavit to be required and received from the person applying for Probate or Letters of Administration in England or Ireland, or on the inventory to be exhibited and recorded in Scotland.

2. The Stamp duties imposed by section 38 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' as amended and extended by section 11 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889,' on the value of personal or moveable property to be included in accounts thereby directed to be delivered.

3. The additional Succession Duties imposed by section 21 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888.'

4. The temporary Estate Duties imposed by sections 5 and 6 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889.'

5. The duty at the rate of one pound per centum which would, by virtue of the Acts in force relating to Legacy Duty or Succession Duty, have been payable under the will or intestacy of the deceased, or on or by reference to his death, under his disposition or any devolution from him."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I think a good deal might be said, and a good deal will have to be said when we come to discuss this question, in reply to the concluding observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I do not at all intend to enter into arguments either on that or any other subject now. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman stated at the commencement of his remarks that it was his intention to withdraw this Resolution after replying to any question that might be asked him, and to take a discussion on the other Resolution. In the first place, I understand that the right hon. Gentleman does not intend that the charge to be imposed on an estate by the new Estate Duty shall take procedure of existing mortgages. That being so, I do not gather from him any explanation of how it would be possible for the owner of such an estate to raise the money required. I will assume that an estate is mortgaged, as I am afraid is the case in very many instances, nearly up to, even if not beyond, its full value. How many people are there to be found nowadays who will lend money on second mortgages? And if the money is not found by means of a second mortgage, where is it to come from for meeting the large increase the right hon. Gentleman proposes in the duty?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It can be paid by instalments.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Yes, but supposing that the net income at the owner's disposal, after paying the interest on his mortgage, is not sufficient to enable him to pay the instalments? In that case he will have to attempt to raise the money by mortgage on the residue of the estate. I believe that he will find it impossible to do so, having regard to the present depressed value of land and to the reluctance of investors to lend money on a second mortgage, and the presumption in that case is that the State will have to take the property in place of the tax. The next point I will put to the right hon. Gentleman is this: I understand his explanation of the changes he proposes to make in the Succession Duty, but I wish to know whether he intends that the Succession Duty shall be payable where a life estate is taken on that life estate only, as at present, or on the capital value.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I understand on the life estate.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Then all the alteration the right hon. Gentleman proposes to make is that, whereas the Succession Duty is now invariably chargeable on the life interest only, the right hon. Gentleman proposes where the full estate is taken to charge it on the full estate? Then the right hon. Gentleman imposes the new Estate Duty upon personalty abroad belonging to a person domiciled in England, but I gather that he makes no alteration in the law by which personalty in England, belonging to a person domiciled abroad, escapes the payment of Death Duty altogether.

Sir W. HARCOURT: There are great difficulties.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I know there are difficulties, but I think the unfairness of the system proposed is obvious, and whatever argument there may be for imposing the Estate Duty as well as the Legacy Duty on property abroad belonging to persons domiciled in

England, it seems to me unfair to make such persons liable, without making an attempt to prevent the escape of those who happened to be domiciled abroad. There is another matter I wish to refer to. What the proportions of the proposed increased Death Duties may be, which will be borne in the future by realty and personalty is rather, I think, a matter of argument, but no doubt the right hon. Gentleman proposes a very considerable increase in the existing Death Duties upon individuals. I asked him a question the other evening with reference to the Corporations Duty imposed in 1885. The Committee are aware that that duty is 5 per cent. on the net annual value on certain classes of property belonging to Corporations. The duty payable produces about £36,000 a year, owing to the very large exemptions that were made at the time the Act was passed. I think it was admitted at the time that 5 per cent. per annum was by no means a large payment to be made by these Corporations to set against the then existing Death Duties on individuals. Now that this large increase is made in the Death Duties on individuals, does not the right hon. Gentleman also propose to increase the 5 per cent. Stamp Duty in proportion? There are several points connected with the Corporations Tax that are worth consideration—notably some exemptions which were certainly not intended by Parliament when the tax was imposed, but which have crept into existence owing to the decision of the Law Courts. In fact, the whole Corporation Duty requires dealing with, and I regret that the right hon. Gentleman has not made an attempt to put it on a fairer and more equitable basis as contrasted with the Death Duties.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) wished to know how the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who proposed to tax foreign property belonging to a person domiciled in this country, would be able to impose such a tax? If the whole property of a person domiciled in this country consisted of foreign Stock, how was the right hon. Gentleman going to lay his hands on that Stock?

Sir M. Hicks-Beach

Sir W. HARCOURT: We can do so if the House gives us power.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES asked how the House could give the right hon. Gentleman the power to deal with property in a foreign country where he had no jurisdiction? He noticed that the increase in the charge on landed property amounted to double the present tax. The present tax and the Succession Duty amounted to £1,150,000, and the new tax would eventually amount to £2,500,000. This was an extremely serious matter, and in his opinion it was made far more serious by the method proposed to be adopted for obtaining the value of all this property. The story which the right hon. Gentleman himself told the House about a picture which might have been worth £5,000, but was only worth £500, showed the extreme difficulty of valuing. Other cases might be cited on the point. In 1883 a testator bequeathed six pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough, and for purposes of Probate Duty they were valued at something over £1,150, but five years afterwards they realised £14,000 at a sale. A more striking instance occurred in 1875. Certain pictures and effects were valued for Probate Duty at less than £3,000 in February, 1875, and in May of the same year the same property was sold for £31,000. He mentioned these cases as showing the vagaries of valuation, and he submitted that this method of valuation was an extremely improper method to apply to landed estates. He believed the right hon. Gentleman would find in many cases if the valuation was fairly made and the mortgages were deducted, the deductions would amount to more than the estimated value of the estate. It was notorious that in many cases estates were mortgaged not only up to the hilt, but far beyond the hilt. There was another point which he was not quite clear about. As he made it out, according to the Resolution, taking the case of property worth over £1,000,000, it would pay 8 per cent.; if it passed under settlement it was to pay an additional 1 per cent., and, according to the Resolution, if it went to a stranger it would pay an additional 10 per cent., making 19 per cent. in all, which was a very high percentage.

Sir W. HARCOURT was understood to say that that was in place of 14 per cent. at present.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, ambiguity came in with regard to the word "family." He did not know whether that word was to apply to lineals. He also noted that the words in the Resolution as to Estate Duty were extremely large. It was to apply to all property settled or not settled "which passes or is to be deemed to pass." Therefore, it applied to property which did not pass, but which came in another category.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, that this showed the great mistake of discussing these matters upon a Resolution. The Resolution was always made large enough to embrace everything. What was actually embraced was shown by the Bill, and that was why he was so anxious for the Bill.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said, he was only asking for information upon matters which seemed to require an explanation. It seemed to him that the terms were very ambiguous with regard to the passing of property.

Sir W. HARCOURT: They are the words of the Succession Duties Act.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES thought that was not so; but, at any rate, the words were very wide.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I only rise to make a suggestion to the Committee. It is to the effect that we should pass from this Resolution now, and enter upon a general discussion upon the Budget, of which my right hon. Friend near me (Mr. Goschen) wishes to take a survey. Of course, that will not prevent any questions being raised at a later stage either on the Resolution now before us, or on another Resolution. It is a well-understood principle that the Budget, as a whole, may be discussed on any of the Resolutions.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I propose now to withdraw this Resolution, in order to bring it on first thing to-morrow, and we can then proceed with the others.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin), who was indistinctly heard, said, that an answer which had been given to his right hon. Friend the Member for West Bristol appeared to require an explanation. His right hon. Friend asked whether, in the case of an estate devised in settlement, the first person who took an interest, taking a life interest, the Succession Duty obtained upon the life interest ought to be on the capital value of the estate. The answer was that the Succession Duty was paid on the life interest. To give an instance:—A. B. devised an estate to his eldest son for life, with remainder to his eldest son for life—a strict settlement. A. B. died. What was to be paid on the death of A. B.? He understood that the son and grandson of A. B., and others coming in lineal succession under the settlement, would be clear of all Succession Duty because of the 1 per cent. paid on the capital value, according to the Resolution.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir J. Rigby, Forfar) was understood to say that he had answered the question before. On the death of a person who so settled the estate by will the Estate Duty would be charged, and, of course, would be charged upon the whole property settled. Taking the case where lineals were in the first instance being dealt with, the payment of the Estate Duty on the whole principal value of the property would clear the duty which otherwise would be payable before the Bill became law. The 1 per cent. unquestionably would be put upon the settlement as an additional duty, and would cover all devolutions under the settlement until the property became vested in a person competent to dispose of it, not for the limited interest but for the whole value of the property.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH said, that his question had no reference to the case of lineals put by the Solicitor General.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Income Tax.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the 'Income Tax Act, 1853,' the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value on amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages

> chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—
>
> In England, the Duty of Four Pence;
>
> In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I will ask the House to pass from the extremely important subject with which we have just been dealing, and from questions of detail, to the consideration of the general Budget proposals as a whole. With regard to what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman to-night, I will only say that he appears to have pricked a gigantic bubble. Until now it has been believed in every Radical quarter that realty was paying millions too little, and that the injustice to personalty was extreme. Now, if the figures of the right hon. Gentleman are correct (but they will have to be subjected to a most rigorous analysis), after you have put realty and personalty on the same footing, after you have removed every possible injustice, there remains £300,000 too little which the landed interest has paid in the past

Sir W. HARCOURT: £400,000.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Well, £400,000. I put it to hon. Gentlemen opposite whether that adequately represents what they have believed to be the injustice of the present system? They will further remark that it is in order to remove this alleged injustice—because the matter will have to be carefully considered—that these gigantic proposals are to be made which will employ all the lawyers in England in re-casting the wills of almost every person during the next three or four years. In reviewing the Budget statement of the right hon. Gentleman, I think hon. Members will have to find their way through a multitude of lofty precepts to the consideration of proposals which are large and ingenious, but which, I think, are not free from some financial frailty. I do not remember any speech made on a similar occasion when the sternest doctrines of high morality in finance have been inculcated with such magnificence. I do not intend to comment on the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman in any censorious or unfriendly spirit. Everyone must have sympathised with a Minister who has had to face so large a deficit as that which it is the unfortunate fate of the right hon. Gentleman to have to deal with. But I think he must expect that here and there his proposals will be tested by that high standard of orthodoxy on which he has himself expatiated with so much eloquent emphasis. I need not detain the Committee many minutes in regard to the Expenditure and Revenue of the past year. Nor, indeed, do I propose, considering the largeness of the proposals, to spend much time on the preliminary parts of the Budget statement. The right hon. Gentleman spoke at length on expenditure, and repeated, to a great extent, his protest against the growing amount of expenditure on all our Services. I reminded him last year, and I must remind him again, that it appears now that neither Party can claim any distinction as to economy. Hon. Members opposite have charged Conservative finance, in times past, with being extravagant. But they have now been in Office two years, and under no single head of expenditure is there any symptom of any decline in the charges that are put upon the taxpayers of the country. Therefore, although there is plenty of other kinds of bunkum, I think that that particular form of bunkum had better be avoided in future in election speeches. Now that we have reached a time when State action is to be extended in so many directions, when the State is apparently to undertake so many new duties, when there are to be increased legions of Inspectors, for example—now that all this is to be done, of course the Estimates must rise from year to year. The circumstances are too strong for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, just as they have been too strong for Chancellors of the Exchequer in the past. But the fact is, that if the new doctrine is to prevail in many quarters—it does not prevail in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—if the new doctrine is to be that there is to be expenditure for the masses and payment by the classes, we shall see our expenditure increase by leaps and bounds. With regard to Revenue, the right hon. Gentleman congratulated himself and the country on the fact that in a year like the past there was no falling off in Revenue, which afforded so much evidence of the general solidity and taxpaying power of the country. I associate myself entirely with his satisfaction as regards that point. It is, no doubt, wonderful that in the year which has passed the Revenue reached the point which it did. According to the right hon. Gentleman this is politically and socially satisfactory. As far as it shows the great consuming power of the working classes, no doubt it is satisfactory. But the right hon. Gentleman did not draw attention to the fact that out of £45,000,000 contributed by indirect taxation £30,000,000 were contributed by the drinkers of alcohol. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman in his official capacity that the consumption of alcohol still remains precisely the same as it was, but the same congratulation can hardly be extended to the right hon. Gentleman as the ardent patron of the Local Veto Bill. So far there is no decrease in the moderate desire of the people to resort to alcoholic drink. Among the proofs of prosperity to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded there is one to which I wish to call attention. I share his satisfaction at the existence of this proof, but I doubt whether we ought to draw precisely the same inference from it that he drew. I allude to the increased deposits in the savings banks as showing the growing prosperity of the country. The right hon. Gentleman dwelt on the effect of the Bill of last year by which the limit of deposits was raised, and no doubt that had a great effect. It is, however, important to know how far the increase is to be accounted for by a transfer of deposits from other quarters, and how far it is due to an increase of thrift among the people. In so far as it shows an increase of the power of depositing, of course it is an unlimited blessing. I look upon these deposits as forming a kind of partnership between the masses and the State, and they seem to show that in a vast number of cases by self-reliance and personal effort people are making some provision for their old age. But there is one financial aspect of the question to which I would call attention. As you increase the enormous mass of deposits in the hands of the Government, now amounting to £126,000,000 sterling, and as you extend the limit of these deposits, you are perhaps exposing yourselves to the danger of withdrawals at times when it would be most inconvenient to the State to meet such demands. Hitherto the depositors have not belonged to the classes that suffer most from industrial or commercial depression. When they do come from those classes, you will run the risk of fluctuations in the deposits in your hands at most inconvenient moments. I trust the Chancellor of the Exchequer will accept that suggestion in the spirit in which it is intended. There is, I know, a constant desire at the Post Office to increase its business. In fact, I believe the office would be prepared to "run" the business of the whole country, as the phrase goes, but its ambition ought to be restrained within reasonable bounds. With regard to the Revenue, I do not quite understand why the revenue of the Post Office has shown a certain want of elasticity. I know the telegraphs compete with the telephones; but as regards the Post Office itself, I rather gather there is a falling off in the natural advance we might expect. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman agrees with that. In the case of expenditure, the right hon. Gentleman called attention to the fact that the total had increased in 20 years by £24,000,000, and education had increased by £6,000,000. The right hon. Gentleman contrasted direct and indirect taxation, the remissions that have been made in the case of each and the burdens which have been imposed. In taking into account what has been done for the wage-earning classes, this increased expenditure on education ought to be put on the credit side, because the greater part of these £6,000,000, differing in this respect from other parts of our expenditure, may be viewed as going either directly into the pockets of the working classes, or, if I may use the phrase, into the heads of their children. This expenditure is a distinct boon to them, perhaps a greater boon than if the money had been spent in giving them a free breakfast table, for in that case the middleman would have secured a certain amount of the remission; but in this case the working classes have got the whole of the advantage of the £6,000,000, and I hope, therefore, that in future, when hon. Members contrast what has been done in the last six years in respect of direct and of indirect taxation, they will not omit to take into account the large sum voted for the establishment of free education. The right hon. Gentleman drew a balance sheet, after his comments upon Expenditure and Revenue, and he showed a deficit of £4,502,000. In unfolding it, the right hon. Gentleman used most eloquent language respecting financial morality. He intoned in solemn accents the articles of his financial creed, saying—

> "This is a very formidable sum. How is this vast deficit to be met? Not by borrowing; not by abandoning the fixed and permanent provisions for the liquidation of the Debt."

Yes, not by abandoning those provisions, but by tampering with them. The Committee will remember how startled we all were when, after his declarations on the subject of financial morality, the right hon. Gentleman told us that he was going to diminish this year the amount fixed by Statute for the reduction of the Debt by £2,000,000. I think this stern financial purist, when he made up his mind to come to such a conclusion as that, must have entered in his private diary on that day, "I was tempted and fell." The right hon. Gentleman cast a kind of cloud over this transaction, but it is as clear as daylight. I do not condemn the action of the right hon. Gentleman; I only condole with him on his lapse from his own standard of financial purity. This is the position. At the commencement of this year the amount fixed for the discharge of the permanent Debt was £25,000,000. Besides that, there was an amount of £1,400,000, which ought by Statute to be paid out of the Revenue of this year, and an amount of £500,000, likewise by Statute, which ought to be paid out of the Suez Canal dividends, both applicable to the discharge of debt. But these statutory provisions are not convenient to the right hon. Gentleman, and he is going to repeal so much of them as will enable him to dispense with the payment of £1,400,000 and to annex the Suez Canal dividends as a windfall. [Sir W. Harcourt: Not as a windfall.] I will gladly withdraw the word. The effect of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal is that the £25,000,000 set aside for the payment of the permanent Debt will be diminished this year by £2,000,000, which have to be applied towards the payment of other debt. I trust we shall hear no more from the right hon. Gentleman of these high doctrines; but if we do, I shall be very happy to meet the right hon. Gentleman upon that ground; and if he thinks we are to hear more upon this, then there is a temptation for me to go more fully into the matter. However, for the present, I will refrain from doing so, and will only put one point which the right hon. Gentleman evaded and avoided. He has in this year, irrespective of his new proposals, an Estate Duty of 1 per cent. How does it come to figure in the Revenue? It was a temporary tax put on to discharge the annuity under the Naval Defence Act. We did not put that annuity upon our successors in the ordinary sense. We established a tax which should last so long only as the annuity lasted, and no longer; but the right hon. Gentleman discharges the annuity out of the provisions made for the permanent Debt, and annexes the particular tax imposed by Parliament for a particular purpose and diverts it to his own use in meeting the ordinary expenditure of the year. That is the story of the financial expedient by which he proposes to reduce his deficit to a sum of, I think, £2,390,000. The right hon. Gentleman then began to lay down fresh principles, and said that in order to deal with a sum of that magnitude it would be necessary to have recourse to the great staple branches of Revenue, and he stated his views that no small taxes should be imposed. I do not blame the right hon. Gentleman for not imposing small taxes.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I meant for a large deficit.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes, and he said that for large deficits you must go to the larger sources of Revenue. I know that there exists in the mind of the public lic a certain prejudice against any fiscal changes which disturb certain trades or give trouble. I enter my protest against that. The Committee will, I hope, allow me to put this view before them. In my judgment, our total fiscal system rests upon a very narrow foundation. The whole Revenue is derived from a comparatively small number of sources. Any one, indeed, who can broaden the basis and find new sources of Revenue by which you can avoid a constant recurrence, for example, to the Income Tax, will render and does render a public service. The right hon. Gentleman has to meet a heavy deficit, but it is not such a one as could not possibly have been met by far less financial changes than he has thought wise to introduce. I think the right hon. Gentleman has, this year, preferred dealing with large financial reforms to dealing with other measures, and securing the certainty of other measures passing. Last year he was unable to deal with the Death Duties because he had no time. The House was engaged with other considerable and very important business, and the right hon. Gentleman found he had no elbow room. Every one who listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman on the occasion of introducing the Budget and who listened to his speech this evening, when he told us he had been in 50 minds on one particular point, will recognise that he may find that if the Committee only had 50 minds on the subject, and—I will not say if the whole of us who had different minds on the subject were to give expression to our views, but if a few of us were—the discussion of these proposals would absorb a period of time which would leave very little margin for the consideration of the general legislative programme of the Government. The proposals are extremely complicated, as the right hon. Gentleman has admitted, and, with every desire to sift them fairly, it is clear we shall have to spend a very large amount of time upon them. The right hon. Gentleman deals with the Death Duties. I do not propose to discuss the Death Duties to-night in any sense except one, and that is as regards the question of graduation. That is financial, and is a point which lies outside of the legal questions involved in a re-arrangement of the Death Duties. A system of graduation may not be applied to Probate Duty alone, and it stands on a totally different footing from the other questions. Let me point out at this stage that, so far as securing money is concerned, the right hon. Gentleman is only going to improve his deficit within the year by £300,000 through the means of the Death Duties. He expects them to yield £1,000,000. He is going to put the Income Tax upon the net instead of the gross, which will cost him £700,000, so that his net gain by this immense operation he is undertaking is only £300,000 this year. [Sir W. HARCOURT was understood to indicate dissent.] I am showing what he gains. By the change in the Death Duties alone he does not gain £1,000,000, because if he did not impose Death Duties he would not give the relief of this £700,000, which would remain over to the Income Tax, and he would be only £300,000 short. If he had confined himself to the Income Tax, and left Death Duties alone, the result of the loss to the Budget would be £300,000. There is the whole result of the operation for securing £300,000. The regulation of the Death Duties has been imposed upon the right hon. Gentleman as a task which he was bound to perform as soon as he could find time. I frankly admit that it has been part of the creed of the Liberal and Radical Party for many years, and it was right that he should undertake it. But it was not right to undertake it simply from the financial point of view. As regards the question of graduation, we come there upon what is, no doubt, the newest part of the scheme brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer —new in the sense that such a scheme has never before been proposed to Parliament. The Committee must therefore regard it with very great gravity and seriousness. It would be impossible in a Debate of this kind—one upon general proposals of the Government—to exhaust the subject of this serious graduation. But I should like to open up the subject, and I am sure it will be felt to be perfectly right that some of the views we entertain on this question should be placed before the Committee. Schemes for graduation have been placed before Chancellors of the Exchequer by the Inland Revenue Authorities for some years past. I myself have had a tentative proposal in my hand which did not differ very much from the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, but in fact bore a remarkable resemblance to it. That scheme eased off properties under £1,000; it put 3 per cent. on properties between £1,000 and £5,000; 4 per cent. on those between £5,000 and £25,000; and 4½ per cent. on properties between that value and £50,000. This tentative proposal precisely resembled that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer up to this point. On properties ranging in value from £50,000 to £100,000 it was to be 5 per cent. Then, from £100,000 to £500,000, 5½ per cent., and properties valued at over £500,000 had to pay the maximum amount, which was put at 6 per cent. This scheme was in my hands at the time that the Estate Duty was proposed, but I did not see my way to propose even a scheme of that character, which was 2 per cent. below the maximum of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, to my colleagues or to Parliament. The Estate Duty gave me sufficient money at that time, and because I imposed a scheme increasing the duty on estates above £10,000 by 1 per cent., the right hon. Gentleman has quoted me as an authority for a graduated scheme of this kind, but it is not fair to quote a step such as I took as a justification for the step that has now been taken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman has done me the honour to quote me a good many times. Well, imitation is said to be a form of flattery, but exaggeration is a form of caricature—and I would rather that the Chancellor of the Exchequer turned his attention to quoting the views which have been expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian upon this question. What are the views of the Member for Midlothian upon graduation? The Member for Midlothian has for years presided over the finances of this country, and he has never submitted a scheme of this kind, so far as I remember, or even discussed a scheme of this kind, unless it has been within the last two or three years, and as to that I have no knowledge. But I shall give evidence presently to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there was a time when certainly the sentiments enunciated by the right hon. Member for Midlothian would have been contrary to a scheme of this kind. We must all admit that there is something in the doctrine that increased burdens should be placed upon those who are best able to pay. Graduation introduces this principle and establishes the standard of taxation, not only by the ability of the man to pay, but by the extent of the sacrifice, and it is felt by everyone that there is a greater sacrifice in the case of a man having but £1,000 a year who is called upon to pay £100 than there is in the case of a man with an income of £10,000 a year, who would now be required to pay £1,000. There is, no doubt, much to be said in favour of taxing those who are best able to pay, without undue sacrifice, if you can do so fairly and on equitable grounds. I wish it distinctly to be understood that I am not discussing this subject in any final or dogmatic spirit, but I am simply anxious to point out some of the points involved. You get launched here on a new field altogether, where you have no standards to guide you. That is where I see the greatest possible difficulty. You can gauge an extra 1 per cent.; but when you say that estates are to pay 10 per cent., or 15 per cent., everyone will ask why not 20 or 25 per cent? I have no doubt that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be met in Committee with Amendments proposing that a millionaire should be taxed 10 per cent. instead of 8 per cent. But where are you going to find a standard of what is right to take when you go up to the higher figures? I think that the standards will vary from Parliament to Parliament, and from majority to majority; and the principle of taxation will depend on the wave of public opinion, and not on that equality of taxation which has been insisted upon in our finance. The House of Commons should take that point into consideration. The example of Victoria has been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman; but are we seriously asked to accept the colony of Victoria as a specimen of financial orthodoxy with its protective tariff, with the working classes defending themselves as they do through their tariff? I ask the House to remember that the whole structure of our society, as well as the accumulation of wealth here, is different from that in a new country and in any of our colonies. I know that in many quarters there is a hostility to capital, but it is largely by capital that you are able to find the immense sums which the Chancellor of the Exchequer requires now for discharging the duties of the State. I am anxious that this graduation should not become a kind of scaffolding for plunder. I am quite certain the idea is not in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer or of the Government as a whole. Possibly it is not in the minds of many hon. Members; but there is the possibility of inflicting injustice after injustice because you will have no standard to guide you—no landmarks to place along this road of taxation. On the principle of prudence, therefore, it behoves the House to look very carefully at the scheme of graduation. On another point, that of evasion, I have to say that I was advised by the Inland Revenue that after you had reached a certain point in putting on Death Duties you would then easily reach the point where the increase of duty would not necessarily bring you in an increase of revenue in the course of the year—not in consequence of fraud, but in consequence of yielding to one very natural human impulse instead of yielding to another. What is the human impulse under which £1,000,000 is accumulated? The hon. Member for Leicester said that no man ought to possess £1,000,000. I do not understand how he could work that out. Does he mean that such a man is not to earn it, or does he mean that he ought to give it away? He must mean that he is to spend it in his lifetime, to distribute it; and in distributing it, he gives it to his sons during his lifetime and withdraws it from the clutches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The objection to this accumulation may be a good one; but what is, then, to become of the Death Duties? The money, on this assumption, is not to be distributed *in articulo mortis*—not at the very last moment—but the possessors might distribute it to their sons as soon as they have secured that amount of wealth which is ample for themselves. A man now says, "I think it better to retain the control of the money in my own hands, and I will leave it to my sons when I die;" but if you are going to take several thousands of pounds from the family money, and waste it by paying it to the Exchequer, it would form a very potent motive for distributing the money during the lifetime of the testator. Not only, therefore, considerations of prudence, but the amount of taxation which will be recovered, must induce the House to pause before it fixes the Death Duties at too high a figure. I have heard it discussed within the last two or three days how this duty would be evaded, and how arrangements would be made the upshot of which would be that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not benefit. It is suggested that in some cases families would establish their businesses on the limited liability principle and give shares to their sons. This would ensure the money remaining in the business, but, belonging as it did to the sons, the possessors would not be taxed at death. Those are matters which ought to be studied, and no one would be discharging his duty unless he examined a great and serious change like this with all the care he can bring to bear on it. I go back now to the financial point that the Death Duties are to supply an additional £1,000,000, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer then proposes an increase in the Income Tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has recourse again to the penny, but he does not get much value out of it, owing to the further changes which he proposes. Taken together he will gain £1,300,000 through the imposition of a penny and the change in the Death Duties, the enormous change which is made by placing realty and personalty on the same footing, and by this graduation scheme. I give every credit to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in dealing with the Death Duties he was bound to put the Income Tax on the net instead of on the gross amount. It will be necessary, however, to examine whether the proposed deductions of one-sixth in the case of houses and one-tenth in the case of land are fair or not. I have heard a great deal during the past year from house-owners in the Metropolis showing that what they lost through the Income Tax being put on the gross instead of the net was very much more than the 16 per cent. to which the right hon. Gentleman has consented. This point will have to be examined very carefully. It was held at one time that a Valuation Bill would be necessary to carry out such a scheme; but I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has not waited for a Valuation Bill, and that he sees a way to deal with the question in some other form. I now come to the last of the changes of the right hon. Gentleman, which is the reduction of the Income Tax on the incomes of the poorer people. The Committee will feel that there is no point on which, so far as sympathy goes, objection will be taken to the action of the right hon. Gentleman in his effort to relieve those who pay Income Tax on the lower scale. I have always felt that they are people who bear very heavy burdens, and everyone would wish to see them relieved. Carrying out that view, we proposed and carried a reduction in the rate of duty upon houses occupied by the poorer classes, a measure which I think was not exposed to the same difficulties and possible dangers which may be seen in the present proposal of the

Government. I do not blame the right hon. Gentleman personally for having made this proposal, but he will remember that what he is doing is to give relief to a very large class at the very moment that he is imposing an additional burden on other classes by the same tax. It is not a remission of taxation simply, but the burdening of a certain number of other taxpayers of the country.

Mr. STOREY (Sunderland): If it is just.

Mr. GOSCHEN: But is it just?

Mr. STOREY: That is the point.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not know whether the hon. Member represents the new Radicalism or the old; but I recall an interesting circumstance to the Committee. In 1876 the then Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir S. Northcote) proposed and carried changes which were in one respect based on the same principle as those of the right hon. Gentleman. He raised the limits of of exemption and the amount of abatement, and he was denounced in the House in the strongest terms which a man could use by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. I myself took the view that the change was of a questionable character to give relief in order, as it were, to ease the passage of a scheme putting the burden on the minority. This is what the right hon. Member for Midlothian thought of a proposal which was on all-fours with that now proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

> "It is undoubtedly not as Liberal Members of Parliament in particular that we are called upon to oppose a measure the obvious purpose of which is to relieve the larger and more numerous classes of society at the expense of the more limited and wealthier. That duty belongs to us as men of honour and, I think, as prudent men."

Now, that is a pretty strong declaration for the right hon. Member for Midlothian to have made. He continued—

> "It is truly stated that this is a proposal by which I will not say you bribe the majority, but by which you induce the majority of the actual taxpayers to acquiesce in the increase of a tax by making that increase positively and absolutely beneficial to them. You encourage them to run in upon the minority; for you are going to make the increase of the taxation of the minority reimburse and compensate the State for the relief you give to the majority. Is that a safe principle? I have serious doubts whether we were right in 1872 in raising the maximum up to which deduction is allowed from £200 to £300. But that is totally different from what my right hon. Friend has done, which is to purchase, in the same Act and law, the relief of one man at the expense of another who is compelled to pay for the relief as well as his own share of the tax."

Therefore, the hon. Member for Sunderland will see that there is something to be said on the other side. At that time the whole Liberal Party voted against Sir Stafford Northcote, holding as they did the views expressed with such strength by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. This moment seems to be particularly inopportune for the form of relief which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has devised for a body whom we are all anxious to relieve. As the right hon. Member for Midlothian pointed out, you are weakening the greatest engine of our national taxation. He said, in effect, that if you proceed in these lines of exception, you weaken and encroach upon the possibilities of that great piece of machinery for any emergency. And remember, when the exemptions are once made, you can never retrace your steps. How much more by the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman do you weaken the machinery than was the case when the right hon. Member for Midlothian made the speech which I have quoted? This may have been forced upon the right hon. Gentleman. In his speech he expressed sympathy. But (said the right hon. Member for Midlothian), we must not be led away in this matter by our sympathies, however much we may desire to help this particular class. It is by other means that relief ought to be given. This is another instance in which I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer he has lapsed from the high doctrines of financial orthodoxy, or from the doctrines of his right hon. Friend. I think the total which the right hon. Gentleman gave us as the result of his enormous changes up to this point was £1,330,000; and then he says that he must find another £1,000,000. Again, the right hon. Gentleman is good enough to resort to what he calls a "flattering imitation." He deals with the Beer and Spirit Duties; and because one Chancellor of the Exchequer has at one time proposed a tax on a particular industry, he thinks that he must select this same industry to contribute to the Revenue of the State again.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It contributes least.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not understand the interjection of the right hon. Gentleman. What is he going to get out of this Beer and Spirit Duty? I congratulate him here upon one fact—that he counts among his supporters a majority of the Scotch Members and a majority of the Irish Members. I presume that he will not have to encounter that opposition from them which was extended over nights and nights at the time of the discussion upon the increased Spirit Duty which I proposed. I do not know what arrangements have yet been made by the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the continuance of this tax. Rumours have been abroad that it is to be made a tax which is to end with the present financial year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I stated that it was to end with the present financial year.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Then the right hon. Gentleman ought to write off £1,000,000 from his Budget. In this announcement I will prove to the right hon. Gentleman that he has struck a blow at his Budget of which he has not yet calculated the consequences. When I proposed a Beer Duty my friends behind me pressed me extremely hard to limit the duty to one year. They were very angry, and they put considerable pressure upon me; but I thought it impossible to make that concession, because if you impose a tax and you make it known on what particular day that tax will cease, there will be no deliveries of the article taxed for a long period, and you will be unable to secure your Revenue. So I did not impose the tax simply for one year, but simply said that beer must take its fair chance of remission with other articles, and I would not give way. The right hon. Gentleman knows something about this, too, because if the brewers had joined with the Liberal Party at that time, the Conservative Government might have been turned out on the Beer Duty. But they supported the Government of the day, and the tax still exists. I must press this point with regard to the tax ending with the present year. But that is not the only difficulty. I ask this question. Is this direct or indirect taxation? There is a confusion in the minds of everyone on this point, and I am not sure that I have not shared the confusion myself. The right hon. Gentleman did not say whether he considers it to be direct or indirect taxation. The general rule seems to be that, at the time when you are persuading the House to impose a duty, it is a direct tax on the profits of the brewers; but that after the tax is imposed, it forms a portion of the indirect taxation which has been levied on the country. But I understand and believe that in this case, as regards spirits at any rate—I am not sure about beer—the tax will be borne by the consumer. That is to say, the consumer will not pay it, but will contribute it to the Revenue through drinking more diluted liquor. I will read a communication which has just been handed to me, which states the case very clearly and forcibly—

> "For argument's sake, hitherto, of every 100 gallons of whisky sold, 85 gallons have been proof spirit and 15 gallons water. Now, of every 100 gallons sold, 82 gallons will be proof spirit, and 18 gallons water. Therefore, if the consumption of spirits remains the same in quantity, the amount of proof spirit going out will be 3 per cent. less, and I do not see how the trade can expect to sell more, as the consumer will make a quart or bottle go as far as before."

That the smaller quantity of whisky should go as far as the greater is, socially, extremely desirable, but financially very disastrous—

> "Eighty-five gallons at a duty of 10s. 6d. brings to the Exchequer £44 12s. 6d.; and 82 gallons at a duty of 11s. brings in £45s. 2s., so that on every 100 gallons sold the Revenue will benefit only by 9s. 6d., instead of, as the Government hope, by 50s."

That is not a very pleasant prospect for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman must have taken that more or less into consideration; but it is as nothing compared with what he has done by this bargain of limiting this tax to the end of the present financial year. Has he any precedent for such a course? Has it ever been done before? Or is it a new form of the high financial morality in reference to this article, another case of that "fiscal orthodoxy" which the right hon. Gentleman so often hurls at us? I will refer him to the occasion in 1885 when Mr. Childers proposed an increased Spirit Duty. Then the brewers and the spirit dealers pressed Mr. Childers to limit the imposition of the duty to one year. Mr. Childers said—

> "In Committee we shall provide that the duty (the Beer Duty) will only last till the 31st of May next year, so that in the first Session of the new Parliament the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to propose a Resolution as to beer precisely as he will have to do with regard to tea, which is only an annual duty."

Sir W. HARCOURT: Hear, hear!

Mr. GOSCHEN: That cheer is unfortunately premature, because Mr. Childers went on to say—

> "But that could not be done as to the Spirit Duty. Practically, if the duty on spirits were left only determined to a particular day next year the trade and the Revenue would be in a complete state of disorganisation."

The right hon. Gentleman extends to spirits what Mr. Childers was content only to apply to beer, and the result is that every gallon of whisky that is taken out of bond after the 1st of April will pay less duty than if it had been taken out on March 31. Of course, it is plain that every effort will be made to reduce the stock of whisky during the present financial year. I congratulate the hon. Members from Ireland on their ingenuity and sagacity in having extracted a promise from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject, because they will actually pay less duty this year with an increased duty on whisky than they did last year with a lower duty. He is going to lose 10s. 6d. per gallon on every cask of whisky which remains in bond, and therefore you must calculate what diminution there will be in the revenue from spirits throughout the United Kingdom. What is the amount of the revenue on spirits? It is really in round numbers £16,000,000 from the Excise alone, which is about £300,000 a week. Now, if the consumption and stock are reduced by one-twelfth—and it is by no means a violent supposition that it will be so reduced in regard to such an article as whisky—it is equal to a loss of revenue of £1,200,000, or within £100,000 of the tax which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to put on. Under these circumstances, I would in the most friendly spirit recommend the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether it is worth while to press the tax, which will disturb the whole organisation of the trade and give rise to great friction? There will be every kind of difficulty towards the end of the financial year, and how will the Chancellor of the Exchequer prevent the trade working up to that particular day? The prospect of its approach will be enough to induce persons to withhold payments. There will be endless uncertainty. The fact is, that the right hon. Gentleman has granted a concession to his Irish friends which will destroy the balance of his Budget; and supposing that the Home Rule Bill had passed, how would matters have stood then? I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman that under present circumstances he is able to bargain with the hon. Members from Ireland, whereas if the Home Rule Bill had passed, does the right hon. Gentleman think that there is anything that would have induced 80 hon. Members from Ireland to have passed a Resolution for an increase in the Spirit Duties when they had nothing to gain by it? I think the right hon. Gentleman is to be congratulated upon that point, and, while I am about it, I may as well congratulate him on the fact that he has not in his Budget to provide an extra £500,000 in order to set up a Home Rule Parliament. In regard to a great part of this Budget, I have not been anxious to approach it in any partisan spirit, although, of course, I was bound to refer to the historical points mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have frankly endeavoured to avoid Party spirit, but all these proposals will have to be examined with the greatest possible care, because they establish a number of new principles, as to which it is difficult to calculate how they will affect the springs of our national prosperity. I therefore hope that both sides of the House will approach them with a candid desire to sift all the difficulties of the present financial situation to the utmost, and with an impartiality which will ensure to the nation that these proposals have been properly considered by their Representatives in this House.

***Sir W. HARCOURT**: I have nothing to complain of in the tone of the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman upon the financial proposals of the Government. I do not grudge him the little gallop in Party references which he has made on the subject of Home Rule, which he thought it necessary to introduce into this Debate. I will very briefly notice one or two of the principal points to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. First of all, he spoke of the savings banks. The right hon. Gentleman is rather timid upon many subjects, and his timidity is in excess upon this subject. He is dreadfully afraid lest the people of this country should put too much money into the savings banks, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have exaggerated responsibilities in regard to those deposits.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman will understand that it is "on demand." That is the main point. I have nothing to say in regard to the amount of the deposits; what I commented upon was the enormous amount withdrawable on demand.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cannot entertain the opinion that anyone occupying the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer should discourage and restrain the amount put into the savings banks by the masses of the country.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I never said anything of the kind.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am at a loss, then, to understand what was meant by the observation of the right hon. Gentleman. I cannot understand why the right hon. Gentleman warned me of the danger of the vast and rapid increase in the deposits in the savings banks payable on demand. I do not regard that increase with apprehension, but, on the contrary, I regard it with the highest satisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the great growth of the expenditure during the last 23 years and spoke of the £6,000,000 which had been added on account of education. But there is another £6,000,000 of which the right hon. Gentleman took no notice—that was the amount of the subsidy to the rates which was withdrawn from the Revenues of this country. Then my right hon. Friend referred to financial purists. That is a subject on which I am somewhat sensitive. I agree that my financial principles are exactly the opposite of those of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman's financial purity consisted in this: He began his finance of five years by diminishing by £2,000,000 the Navy Estimates; then he diminished permanently the provision for the payment of the National Debt; then, having engaged in a large expenditure, he carried it out by borrowing money. The right hon. Gentleman did not meet the Expenditure of the year by the Revenue of the year, and having borrowed the money which he left others to pay he declared surpluses out of borrowed money. These are the financial principles of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman again omits the fact that I imposed £1,400,000 of additional taxation.

*Sir W. HARCOURT: That does not alter the fact. The right hon. Gentleman may have imposed that additional taxation, but he left a debt of £5,000,000 behind him, and had every year a deficit, although he declared a surplus. The right hon. Gentleman cried "Peccavi" the other night, and said that if he had known that what had happened was going to happen he would never have done what he did. One does not require to be a great financier to say that, but there was one sentence which appeared in some of the newspapers which I will quote. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "If the right hon. Gentleman should think it right that the annuities for these two years, which amount to £1,500,000, should be capitalised he would be perfectly ready to bear all the odium of having increased the debt by £3,000,000."

If the right hon. Gentleman had only done that, it would not have been necessary for me to suspend the New Sinking Fund, because the liability would have been discharged by the ordinary Debt Fund. But the right hon. Gentleman, with his ingenuity and his financial principles, instead of admitting that he had done what he did, which was to create a part of the permanent Debt of the country, by ingenious devices endeavoured to conceal from the public what, in fact, he was doing; and the reason why I have been obliged to make these arrangements is because the right hon. Gentleman invented the, financially speaking, abominable machinery of the Naval Defence Act and hid from the world that he had borrowed £5,000,000 of money and had left it as a debt to those who came after him to pay. That is the reason I have had to do this. What is it that I am going to do? I am going to meet the Expenditure of this year out of the Revenue of this year. As long as I hold the Office I have the honour to fill, I shall never resort to any other expedient. I have, in point of fact, treated this £5,000,000 as it ought to have been treated, and as the right hon. Gentleman has now admitted that it ought to have been treated—namely, as part of the regular permanent Debt of the country to be discharged out of that fund.

MR. GOSCHEN: I do not admit it at all. What I meant was that if the right hon. Gentleman, in order to help himself out of a difficulty, chose to do that, I would not oppose his doing so; but I said nothing with regard to the original condition of the Debt.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: If the right hon. Gentleman had done what he ought to have done at the time of the transaction everything would have been perfectly regular. He borrowed the money; it was part of the Debt, and I am now discharging it as part of the Debt. I maintain that what I asserted in my speech on the Budget is true. I have not suspended the Permanent Debt Fund, but have used it for its proper purpose, and that is the discharging of debt. Compare that with what the right hon. Gentleman did. He suspended the Debt Fund, not for one year, not for two years, but for ever. He abandoned for ever £2,000,000 of the Fund set apart for the payment of the Debt—not for the payment of the Debt, but for the purpose of using it as annual Revenue. He used it for the purpose of reducing the Income Tax in order to obtain popularity by that course. That was the financial purity of the right hon. Gentleman. Then, the right hon. Gentleman does not agree with me on the subject of small taxes, and he wants new sources of revenue. When the right hon. Gentleman succeeds me as Chancellor of the Exchequer—which I understand will be some time in the course of this month—he will tell us what the small taxes are from which he desires to derive revenue. That is the view of the right hon. Gentleman. I have often heard my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian denounce that doctrine. It was stated 20 years ago by Sir George Cornewall Lewis and was then attacked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian. For my part, I believe that for great variety of revenue you must rely on great taxes, and not harass the interests of the country by the multiplication of small taxes. The whole financial policy of this country since the time of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian has been the reduction of the number of taxes and not the multiplication of small taxes. The right hon. Gentleman objects to my quotations from him, and complains that I quoted him as an authority for the germ of graduation. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has had the opportunity of telling us what he thinks on that subject. He says that the question of graduation was propounded to him in a more moderate form while he was at the Exchequer, and that he rejected it. That reminds me of some lines by a great poet:—

> "Che fece per viltade il gran rifiuto!"

I think the time will come when this question of graduation will surely take its place in the taxation of this country, and then it will be remembered that the right hon. Gentleman had that proposal before him, that he deliberately refused it, and that to-day, on behalf of the Party he represents, he repudiated the principle of graduation.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I must say that the right hon. Gentleman is attempting to make a Party advantage out of this, which is totally unjustified by anything I said. It would be impossible for me, without any communication, to speak authoritatively on behalf of the Party; and, besides, I invited hon. Members on both sides not to reject the scheme, but to examine it. Still, I thought it my duty to point out the many difficulties involved in it and the considerations which ought to be borne in mind. I repudiate entirely the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, that as the representative of the Party I repudiated the principle of graduation.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: I am very glad the right hon. Gentleman has not made up his mind against this principle. The truth is, that the right hon. Gentleman's mind is so evenly balanced that it is always difficult to discover on which side he is in regard to a particular question. At this moment, whether he is for graduation or against it, I do not know. Then the right hon. Gentleman has said there are methods of evasion. I understand it to be suggested that families are to be formed into Joint Stock Companies for the purpose of evading payment of the Death Duties. Whether they are to be formed for the purpose of escaping death itself I do not know. The right hon. Gentleman thinks that methods of evasion will be adopted. Do you think there has been no disposition, no temptation, to avoid payment of these duties up to the present? I admit that in questions of this kind—and especially in new questions—you ought to be moderate. I think it would be a great mistake to introduce a principle of this kind at a very high figure. That would alarm people, and drive them into methods of evasion which, I think, it would not be right to encourage. I have received large numbers of letters—and, to my astonishment, more from Conservatives than Liberals—expressing satisfaction with the proposals made by me in the Budget. The right hon. Gentleman next said that it was a perfectly new departure, and contrary to sound financial principles to impose taxes in order to take others off. What is the history of the great financial reforms of Sir Robert Peel? Why, the whole thing was based on his taking taxes off poorer people who could not afford to pay them. In 1841 he imposed the Income Tax, which had not existed since 1816, in order to take taxes off the poorer people. All the financial policy of Sir Robert Peel and of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian was based upon no other principle than that. They had, throughout, used the great engine of the Income Tax and other direct taxation in order to relieve the humbler classes of the community from a multitude of taxes which they were not able to bear. That is the principle of all sound finance in this country. The next point upon which the right hon. Gentleman expresses his dissent is the method of relaxation, by way of exemption and abatement, proposed in reference to the Income Tax. There is, however, one allowance which the right hon. Gentleman has not objected to, and that is the allowance under Schedule A to the landlords. Not one word of objection has he raised to that.

Mr. GOSCHEN: That is counterbalanced.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The abandonment of a portion of the Income Tax to men under £500 a year does not commend itself to the right hon. Gentleman. That is, I suppose, a dangerous proposal, because it would be a relief to the humbler classes of the community. ["Oh!"] If that was not so, what is the meaning of all this criticism? I should like, incidentally, to mention a point which has been strongly urged upon me. I have been asked, when I spoke of £500 a year and £400 a year, whether the abatement was meant to cover the full figures of £400 and £500, or whether I only meant to speak of sums under £400 and under £500. As this will apply to a large number of persons whose salaries are exactly those figures, I think the allowances should be made up to those figures, and not stop below them. Then the right hon. Gentleman asked what was so dangerous as to carry out these abatements to a large portion of the community. Does he object or does he approve of those proposals? Will he oppose or will he support them?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I think the right hon. Gentleman might have listened to my speech. I told him my own view and the course the Party would take.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then what is the meaning of this carping criticism? If these are proposals you are going to support, why does the right hon. Gentleman disparage them? Why these apprehensions as to all that is going to follow the passing of them? Then the right hon. Gentleman said, "I did something in this way; I diminished the House Duty." Yes, but that is no good to anybody but householders. What is the good of that to clerks who are not householders—men with incomes between £200 and £300 a year? What is this principle of finance which is "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike"? The right hon. Gentleman is in favour of financial purity. He is opposed to the relief we give. He dislikes it, but he is not prepared to oppose. Then, he says, we have weakened the Income Tax. He says that in the time of war or when stress comes we shall repent having given this relief to the humbler classes. No, Sir. In my opinion, our action will strengthen, not weaken the Income Tax. In my opinion, the weakness consists in putting undue pressure upon those who are little able to bear it. I gladly have given these two remissions because I thought they were just to the two classes affected, and because I thought it was a sound principle of finance to remove the pressure and thus make the tax less unpopular than it is. Therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman tells me that I have weakened the Income Tax by making it more tolerable to the humbler classes, I again say my financial principles are directly opposed to that theory. I believe my policy has a tendency not to weaken but to strengthen the tax. The right hon. Gentleman was a little hesitating and ambiguous in his treatment of these matters, but when he came to the Beer and Spirit Duties then he revelled in his subject. He told us the amount which should be taken off the Spirit Duties by methods which he endeavoured to indicate. Here the right hon. Gentleman can assist me very much. First of all, he can take my place and make the duty perpetual. He has advised me not to make it temporary for a single year. I shall be glad of his assistance in resisting the brewers and the spirit merchants, and in making it perpetual. [An hon. MEMBER: Your Irish friends.] Yes; but gentlemen opposite may assist me in that matter; and if they are prepared on behalf of their friends, the brewers and spirit merchants, to propose that the Spirit Duty shall be made perpetual, I will take their offer into very serious consideration. If I can only get a pledge from the right hon. Gentleman I shall consider it. It is the only part of the Budget on which he has really expressed an opinion. He has not ventured to have an opinion on any other part of the Budget. The only outcome of his speech, as it appears to me, is that the Beer and Spirit Duty shall be perpetual. If he will give me time to reflect, as he himself took time to reflect, upon this question I shall reconsider the question of the perpetuity of the duty. The right hon. Gentleman says he is perfectly clear as to his views. I do not know whether he came to the conclusion whether these duties were a direct or an indirect tax. Whether he has an opinion on that subject I do not know, but gentlemen most interested in it have a very clear opinion. I have read utterances on this subject by men of high authority in the trade. I find now that one of the speakers at a meeting in Glasgow, held the other day to consider this subject, said that—

"In approaching this question he wished to draw attention to the fact that it was most unfair and unjust, because the manufacturer might not get the buyer to give the increased duty, and it was now admitted that it was to be exacted from him. The 6d. on spirits could not be divided into fractions. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had put a larger sum upon a barrel of beer it might have been divided into fractions, and then the consumer would have to pay the tax, but this nimble sixpence was like a grain of sand in one's eye—it was irritating until got rid of."

That is the trade opinion on the incidence of the tax. I suppose the gentleman who seconded the resolution at the Glasgow meeting understood the subject. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman wishes to oppose any of these proposals—any of these particular taxes. It is quite true I have put on several taxes. I was bound to deal with the Income Tax, because I was bound to deal with Schedule A. Being, as I say, bound to increase the Income Tax, in my opinion it was desirable to give relief at the lower end, which I think a justifiable proceeding. As far as that goes, I have only to thank the right hon. Gentleman for his sympathy. Reference has been made to the purity of beer and spirits. How much has the strength diminished at present? What do you think one of the best known spirit merchants advertises—one of the most respectable of the dealers? Why, 52 per cent. below proof. ["No!"] Yes. I have the document in my box, and it is in vain for the hon. Gentleman to shake his head.

MR. USBORNE (Essex, Chelmsford): If anyone sold spirits at 52 per cent. below proof, he would be prosecuted for adulteration and convicted.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am compelled to inform the hon. Member that he is not acquainted with the law. The Adulteration Act states what is the amount of adulteration permitted; but if you tell your customer, you may put whatever amount of water you like.

MR. USBORNE: I admit that.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: Then the hon. Gentleman does not understand his own business. I have here Mr. Gilbey's published list, and he does what every man should do; he states on each bottle what is the strength. The hon. Member will find it in this list, where the price of each commodity is given. Here is 3s. 1d. for a bottle of spirits. I find in one case the mark "52 U.P.," which I understand means under proof. I hope the hon. Member will thank me for giving him some instruction in the business in which I understand he is interested. Here is the printed list, which has been supplied to me by a friend of mine. I have also an amusing document here which I may glance at, if the Committee is interested in the matter. I caused to be tested in different parts of the town what these "twopennorths" of spirits were like as sold over the counter. The tests were, as I have said, made in different parts of London. We took poor neighbourhoods and wealthy neighbourhoods. In Bethnal Green on rum the profit on the selling price is 108 per cent. ; in Mile End, 91 per cent ; in Whitechapel, 96 per cent. ; Walworth Road, 91 per cent. It seems to be on a graduated scale, for when you go to Oxford Street it is 136 per cent., and in Piccadilly it is 230 per cent. When we come to brandy you get a higher class of consumer. In Bethnal Green the profit is 152 per cent. ; Newington Causeway, 164 per cent. ; Whitechapel, 155 per cent. I do not know that brandy is treated on a different scale in wealthy localities ; but in Oxford Street the profit is only 80 per cent., and in the City in a first-class restaurant it is only 142 per cent. On Genevas the profit is—in Bethnal Green 108 per cent., in Oxford Street 165 per cent., in Walworth Road 111 per cent., and in Whitechapel 116 per cent. I had not intended to go into this subject to-day, but the right hon. Gentleman made so much of the Spirit Duties that I could not refrain from offering these statistics. Looking at the subject all round, I do not think that these are trades upon which an undue burden has been placed by the proposals of the Government. Nor do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to dispute that proposition. He does not say that a tax should not be put upon spirits or upon beer. His only complaint is that I do not make it perpetual ; and, as I understand, he does not object in principle to my Death Duties—he only says that I get so little from them. That is, I suppose, because they are not enough. He does not object to the Income Tax ; he does not object to the allowances made under the Income Tax ; he does not object to the Beer Duties, nor to the Spirit Duties. I am happy, therefore, to think that, though our financial principles are so wide apart, our financial conclusions come so near to a point. Under these circumstances, I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the moderation with which he has dealt with the proposals of the Government.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) : When I came down to the House to-day I had not the slightest intention of addressing any remarks to it, but I do not think the speech the Chancellor of the Exchequer has thought fit to make should pass without some brief word of comment and protest. His final words were words of conciliation and peace, but the whole tenour of his remarks not only misrepresented my right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen), but misrepresented him obviously for Party purposes. It appears never to have occurred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that any man could come down to this House to discuss the finances of the country without making Party capital out of it. It never has occurred with himself, and he thinks it never could occur with anybody else. But I can assure him that every word that dropped from my right hon. Friend was not to embarrass the Government by factious criticism, but to bring before the Committee and the country considerations which ought not to be absent from our minds when we are dealing with the most far-reaching financial proposals that have been laid before us for many years. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not endeavoured to answer my right hon. Friend's criticisms, but has sought to twist and pervert them—I will not say turn them into ridicule—but to make them appear to demonstrate that my right hon. Friend is the pronounced advocate of principles with which he did not deal in the most cursory manner. I do not wish to go at length into the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, but I think I can in a very few moments expose his misrepresentations. The first point was about the Sinking Fund, and he actually had the courage to repeat that he had not diverted to other purposes the fund intended for the diminution of the Debt. What has the right hon. Gentleman done? He found the Sinking Fund allocated to the liquidation of the Permanent Debt of the country. He found the annuities allocated to the liquidation of the Temporary Loan. He took the Sinking Fund intended for the Permanent Debt, and allocated it to the Temporary Loan. And he took the annuities intended to deal with the Temporary Loan, and he bagged that for his own purposes. That is the procedure of this financial purist, who has been telling us —I will not say with Pharisaic air, because that would imply a degree of condemnation which I do not wish to throw upon the right hon. Gentleman—but with an air of exceptional virtue, how far he stands above the financial sinner (Mr. Goschen) who sits on my right. My right hon. Friend made a most interesting comment in passing upon the dangers that we are running in confining too much of our taxation to one or two commodities at most. That danger is a real one; I do not think anybody can deny that. How does the right hon. Gentleman meet that criticism, which was not put forward in a captious spirit? He says this is a principle which has been accepted by all financiers from the time of Sir Robert Peel. He says that Sir Robert Peel put on the Income Tax for the very purpose of relieving the poor—or perhaps he referred to Sir Robert Peel at a later stage misinterpreting his policy. Possibly, it is convenient to trade generally that we should confine ourselves to the traditional channels of taxation; but the time may come—I think probably will come—when the right hon. Gentleman's successors may bitterly regret that we have carried to such a length a process which, beneficial though it has been, may be carried too far. The right hon. Gentleman went on to refer to two subjects of profound interest to the public—one the question of graduation, and the other the question of the additional immunities which he has given at the lower end of the Income Tax scale. All my right hon. Friend did was to point out in language of extreme moderation the dangers and difficulties which undoubtedly attach to both those propositions, be they good or bad; and my right hon. Friend did not rely solely in his criticisms upon his own judgment. He rested upon the recent and traditional opinion of the Party opposite, as expressed over and over again in clear and eloquent language by that eminent statesman the Member for Midlothian, who has impressed his personality more upon the financial policy of this country than upon any other portion of our public affairs. My right hon. Friend quoted the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian's, I will not say violent, but certainly rather strong language against certain proposals of Sir Stafford Northcote. The Chancellor of the Exchequer never referred to the authority my right hon. Friend quoted, but took the language and opinions which the right hon. Member for Midlothian expressed, and held them up to scorn and contempt, and said he was thankful his principles were very different from those of the right hon. Gentleman. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is at perfect liberty to his own opinions on finance; but when he comes down here as the apostle and representative of the traditional financial policy of this country, it does not become him to treat with contempt the financial opinions of the Member for Midlothian, at whose feet I should have supposed, in such matters, he would have been glad to sit. The last criticism of my right hon. Friend upon the Budget was directed against the temporary character of the Spirit Duty. His remarks were eminently business-like, and directed to obvious financial difficulties—criticism which, of all other criticism, should have been met by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a business-like spirit. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a few gibes and jokes, but never attempted, even by one word, to deal with the fundamental difficulty which my hon. Friend has laid before this House. The procedure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is almost incredible in its audacity. He comes down and unfolds a Budget which gives a surplus of £280,000, under which it is proposed to make the increase of Spirit and Beer Duty permanent. Pressure is brought to bear by those on whose votes he depends to retain himself in Office, and he is obliged, or thinks himself obliged, to reduce the term during which the Spirit and Beer Duty is to run for one year—that is, to the end of the financial year. My right hon. Friend pointed out that whether the proposal is good or bad, whether it is fair to the brewers and spirit merchants or not, or whether it is fair or unfair to Ireland and Scotland, yet this result must follow: that the surplus of £280,000, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer promised on Monday last, will sink to a deficit of £900,000 if he carries out the new Budget which he has brought down to us to-night. That is a very serious criticism, whether well-founded or ill-founded. My right hon. Friend gave a reason for his opinion in language which must have impressed itself upon hon. Members. Certainly, it showed to me that a very plain danger lies before us, and that the object of making the taxation of the year pay for the expenditure of the year—about which the right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) has made so many boasts, is likely to end in the taxation of the year not paying the expenditure of the year at all. In, perforce, a serious discussion by business men of business matters, what is the use of getting up and making a lot of jokes about irrelevant matters and a good many Party misrepresentations, unless it be for a General Election? What is the use of doing that, and at the same time omitting even the faintest reference to criticism which, if it be well founded, strikes at the very root of the whole Budget? My right hon. Friend quoted the opinion of the Member for Midlothian against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and quoted it in vain. On the Spirit Duty my right hon. Friend quoted against the Chancellor of the Exchequer the opinion of another of his colleagues—Mr. Childers. Surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having got on his legs and treated us to three-quarters of an hour's oration, might, in the course of that oration, have dealt with the most important criticisms laid before him by my right hon. Friend. The truth is, the right hon. Gentleman may have produced a very good Budget, which may have all the financial and popular success he anticipates; but he has not produced a Budget which carries out the professions with which the speech in which it was introduced was so plentifully larded. Over and over again the right hon. Gentleman introduced his views about financial principle and purity. What does it all come to? It comes to this: that the right hon. Gentleman, by his own profession and on his own showing, has to deal with a deficit of £4,500,000; and he has provided every sixpence of that deficit out of the taxation paid by the wealthier classes. That may be right or it may be wrong; but it is deliberately in violation of the principles laid down by the right hon. Gentleman himself in his own Budget speech. Of course, it is open to anyone to say that, while the Beer and Spirit Duties fall largely upon the consumer, they are for the most part drawn from the poorer classes of the community. It may be open to other gentlemen to hold that opinion, but it is not open to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He has, in his Budget speech and since, said that all he has done has been to tax the profits of one bloated and overgrown trade. It may be a good and proper object of taxation, but he cannot ride two horses at once. If he holds to the opinion that this sixpence of Spirit Duty is a tax, not upon the consuming public, but upon the producing and distributing trades, then, Sir, every single source of taxation he has drawn upon to fill up the gap caused by his deficit is drawn from the wealthier classes of the community. That may not be a reason for modifying the Budget, but it is a reason for not accompanying that Budget with professions there is no attempt or pretence to fulfil. There will be other opportunities of discussing the broad principle involved in the details; but I should be sorry to allow this occasion to pass without reminding the right hon. Gentleman how little in this respect he has carried out the promises he was so anxious to hold out to us. But if he cannot condescend to discuss the Budget proposals, either now or when the Bill is before us, without introducing Party recrimination, and by meeting fairly arguments which in all good faith are brought before us, he will find a task which must necessarily be a difficult one amount almost to an impossibility.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, they could hardly let this occasion pass without saying something on the general principle of the Budget as they now knew it. He (Mr. Bartley) could not help being amused at the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was always his intention to defray the expenditure of a year out of the receipts for that year. The right hon. Gentleman did not do it last year. He did not attempt it, for he took a large sum out of the Treasury chest—£300,000—which had been set aside in previous years. Really and truly this was taking borrowed money for the purpose of his annual expenditure. There were many other questions referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it was a great pity he had introduced so much Party heat into the matter. They were told the Budget was to be discussed on a question of finance, and that no Party matters were to be introduced. Well, if Party heat were introduced the right hon. Gentleman only had himself to blame for it—and it would be as well here to remind the right hon. Gentleman that he had not got his Budget through yet. The Opposition were prepared to discuss the Budget without considerations of Party, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer had attacked his predecessor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, and had perverted nearly everything he had said, and that was not a course calculated to conduce to the peaceful consideration of the Budget. He (Mr. Bartley) had been most struck by what was said as to savings banks. The remarks of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer on that subject were very forcible. Everyone must admit that the fact that the Government held £130,000,000 or £140,000,000 payable at call was, on the face of it, a serious consideration. No doubt they were glad that that amount was continually growing. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's had always done his utmost to increase the efficiency of the savings banks; but it was a fact, and a startling one when they came to realise it, that at any moment the Chancellor of the Exchequer might be called on to pay that large amount at short notice. When they were considering the great fiscal questions of the year it was not unreasonable to refer to this, and for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to turn round and retort on the right hon. Gentleman that he seemed to grudge the people putting their money by was to pervert what the right hon. Gentleman had said. He noticed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not like this reference, and was going away——

*SIR W. HARCOURT: Is it expected that I shall remain in the House every moment? I will remain if the hon. Member insists upon it, but I must have some rest, and I thought this would be a convenient time to take it. I had asked my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury to remain. The personal discourtesy I am subjected to is a thing I must protest against.

MR. BARTLEY said, that after the right hon. Gentleman's discourtesy to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer—having perverted everything he had said—and when they were anxious to go into the facts, as they were, they did not like to see the right hon. Gentleman going away whilst they were talking. When he returned he complained of personal discourtesy. He (Mr. Bartley) had never been personally discourteous to the right hon Gentleman, but he must say that when as Leader of the House the right hon. Gentleman attacked a Member he was bound to wait and listen to the answers.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have never thought it worth while to attack you.

MR. BARTLEY said, he was obliged for the right hon. Gentleman's extremely courteous remarks. He was accustomed to such observations from the right hon. Gentleman. They did not hurt him in any way; but if the right hon. Gentleman thought that because he sat on the Treasury Bench and was Chancellor of the Exchequer he could be as discourteous as he liked and nobody would retort, he made a very great mistake. [*Laughter.*] That laughter came from one or two of the right hon. Gentleman's Irish followers whose votes the right hon. Gentleman was securing by agreeing to limit these new Spirit Duties to a year. The hon. Members would, of course, applaud anything the right hon. Gentleman said. Was it intended that the new duties should be permanent? If so, the right hon. Gentleman was deluding his Irish followers, and throwing dust in their eyes. If it was not so intended, then the right hon. Gentleman would not get the money he required by a measure brought in before the end of the financial year, and his Budget would be a delusion. With regard to the Sinking Fund, he (Mr. Bartley) had always urged that it should not be reduced. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman had never condescended to listen to anything he had said in former years. If he had he would remember that some years ago, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square reduced the Sinking Fund, he (Mr. Bartley) protested against it. He would have had it maintained at the £28,000,000 at which it stood when introduced by Sir Stafford Northcote. But it came very ill from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after all he had said about the importance of keeping up the Sinking Fund, that he should have taken the first opportunity to upset his own statements. The country was in a state of peace, the Income Tax was raised to 8d., and now they were going to estop the Sinking Fund to an amount that would represent something like £30,000,000 if they were at war and required to borrow that amount. As to gradations, he had not the least hesitation in saying that he regarded graduated Death Duties as wise and right in principle. On the question of exemptions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, again, was extremely unfair to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's. He (Mr. Bartley) had urged, and urged strongly, that, inasmuch as at the bottom of the Income Tax scale was a class of persons who were most severely hit by taxation, it would be right and proper that exemptions should be made at that end of the scale. But there was force in the remark of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, that this would be regarded as playing a political game—studying the interests of the most numerous class at the bottom of the scale at the expense of the smaller number of taxpayers at the top of the scale. They must remember that they had been gradually increasing the scale of exemption from the Income Tax, and he for one did not think that the exemption which the right hon. Gentleman had given by reducing at the bottom of the scale was so sound and fair a proposal as that of making a difference between spontaneous and industrial incomes. He was aware he might again be courteously told by the right hon. Gentleman that he had already heard his argument on the point 45 times, but he would remind him in reply that he had not yet once condescended to answer him. The man who had an income of £500 a year from spontaneous sources was after all not a man of very small means; but a man who had to earn £500 a year had to put by a larger sum annually. It would have been more equitable and far better for the general community if the right hon. Gentleman had made a larger reduction on industrial incomes, and a smaller one on spontaneous incomes. No doubt the Budget contained many things they all agreed to and approved of; but while he agreed with the system of the graduation of the Death Duties, the justice and fairness of it depended very much on the detail in which it was carried out. The right hon. Gentleman had made an enormous effort to produce a very small amount, and if he had really wanted to take the Sinking Fund he might have done so more boldly, he might as well have been hung for a sheep as for a lamb. It would not have had any worse effect on his career as a financier. They were all aware that he was anxious to produce a sensational Budget; but the details of his proposal would have to be thoroughly thrashed out if they desired to avoid inflicting considerable hardships on many districts and on many interests.

*Mr. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, he very much regretted that a very mischievous and deplorable spirit of Party controversy had been imported into the Debate of this evening by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he thought the subjects under consideration were those to which little, if any, such feeling ought to attach. He said this, although of course he recollected that many Budgets had wrecked many Governments, and that many Party Divisions would no doubt be taken in the future upon the financial policy of future Governments. But if ever there was a Budget from which Party spirit ought to be detached this was that Budget, and if ever there was an occasion when that spirit ought to be absent from their Debate this was the occasion. He did not think that anybody who heard the speech of his right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's could accuse him of having imported any Party references into his masterly criticisms of the Budget which he was examining, and he was certain, if that speech left upon anybody's mind an impression that it was prompted by Party feeling, it could only be attributed to the complexion which the Chancellor of the Exchequer put upon it by way of travesty, or if not travesty, paraphrase, when he replied. He must say he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was unjust and ungrateful in his action in directing Party observations upon the discussion in respect to this Budget. First, the Committee would recollect that the right hon. Gentleman had told them that afternoon that he had been congratulated, "funny to say," in his own words, by Members of the Conservative Party upon his Budget proposals. If he might do so respectfully, and speaking as one who prided himself upon being a Conservative, he desired to associate himself in the congratulations which the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them he had received from Members of that Party upon the subject, and to tender those congratulations very cordially indeed, being sure at the same time that so doing would not, in the opinion of his right hon. Friend opposite (Sir J. T. Hibbert), be taken to preclude him, when the proper time came, from canvassing, examining, criticising, and, if need be, objecting to some of the proposals contained in the right hon. Gentleman's Budget. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was explaining to them the way in which he proposed to levy these complicated, and, in his opinion, in some instances oppressive, Death Duties, he told them that what he wanted was the imposition of such duties, but that he was going to approach the question of their application with a perfectly open mind. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman must see that his opponents had some claim upon his consideration. But there was another reason why he thought the right hon. Gentleman should be a little grateful to his opponents. To whom did he owe three at least of the principal foundations on which the structure of his certainly somewhat complicated Budget had been built up? Which Government was it that bought the Suez Canal shares, to which the right hon. Gentleman would be indebted this year for £250,000, and in future for £500,000 a year? These Party recriminations were not only generated, but extracted by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Which Government and which Chancellor of the Exchequer was it that founded the New Sinking Fund which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was now proposing to make serious inroads upon? Was it not Sir Stafford Northcote, in 1876? He (Mr. Cohen) only wished that that rigid sum of £25,000,000 constituting the New Sinking Fund had never been and never would be applied otherwise than its author intended. Lastly, who was it but Sir Stafford Northcote who extended the system—he was not sure if he was not the author of it—of abatement from Income Tax which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had so beneficently and so wisely, as he thought, further extended on the present occasion. When the right hon. Gentleman was seeking to make Party capital out of the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's he thought he might have with becoming gratitude recollected to what sources he was indebted for three of the pillars upon which his Budget was founded. He should like to say a word or two upon the question of graduation. If there was anything more than another on which he should like to tender to the right hon. Gentleman his congratulations and gratitude it was for having introduced—they knew the first steps were always the most difficult—this principle of graduation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated his opinion to be that the landed owners were those who would be the least likely to feel the burden of the tax. He did not agree with him, but that was only a question of the application of the tax. With the principle he entirely associated himself, and so far as regarded the application of this principle to the passing of personal property on the decease of its owners, he not only wished to subscribe to the principle, but so far as he had been able to examine the proposals he desired entirely to associate himself with their applications. However, he wished to guard himself from expressing this unqualified approval, when they came to the relation of real property to the Death Duties. He might, perhaps, be allowed to say that he thought personal property should be distinguished from real property, in respect of the duty which it paid under this new Estate Duty, quite as much as in other respects, because the one was extremely convertible, and because the testator was in reality not entitled to more than 96 per cent. of the property he left, 4 per cent. being the property of the State, whereas real property was on a different footing. Therefore, while approving of the system of graduation with regard to personal property, he desired to reserve his opinion when they came to deal with the application of the tax to real property. The next point to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred in reply to his right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen) had reference to some observations which had been made as to the financial purity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman was very sensitive about his reputation. He thought, however, the right hon. Gentleman was unjust to his right hon. Friend, who distinctly stated in words that he did not blame the right hon. Gentleman for having diverted the New Sinking Fund. He (Mr. Cohen) was not so indulgent, for he did blame the right hon. Gentleman, preferring, in the right hon. Gentleman's own words, that the taxation of the year should be paid out of the income of the year. The right hon. Gentleman told them that this deficit was not going to be found by tampering with the fund set aside for the permanent reduction of the Debt. That was what he told them on Budget night, and he had told them to-night that so long as he remained Chancellor of the Exchequer the Committee might rely that the expenditure should be paid out of the income of the year. The right hon. Gentleman violated this canon on the same evening that he laid it down. What was the expenditure of the year? Was it that which we paid for the Army, Navy, and Supply Services? If the expenditure for the year was so defined, then he agreed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and probably every one of his predecessors, did pay the expenditure of the year out of the income. But he took the expenditure of the year to include the expenditure on the National Debt. But what the Chancellor of the Exchequer shirked was the redemption and interest in respect of this Debt created out of the Naval Defence Act. He wanted to know from the mouths of these great financial purists who adorned the Treasury Bench by what authority, and on what account, they could distinguish between the charge payable on the Old National Debt and the amount payable on the New National Debt. If any such distinction was sought to be made, it quite violated the rule laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he introduced the Budget. The right hon. Gentleman in his Budget speech did not distinguish between the charge for the old and the new debt, or distinguish between the two being equally a charge upon the year's income. There was not a shred or a shadow, therefore, for suggesting that the right hon. Gentleman was keeping up to the standard he had himself laid down of paying the year's expenditure out of income. As to the Spirit Duties, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, sarcastically, that he would make them perpetual if the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) would give him his valuable support in the endeavour. That was a statement which would be very effective on a platform, but it was hardly worthy of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because everyone present knew that the pith, the figures, the details of the reference of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's to the subject were directed to the continuance of the Beer Duties for a certain period and of the Spirit Duties until the repeal of the Act. The right hon. Gentleman had not argued that because of the eligibility of beer and spirits for being charged. He (Mr. Cohen) did not know what the right hon. Gentleman's opinion on that subject was. But the right hon. Gentleman argued the question entirely from a financial point of view—as to the injustice which would arise to the Exchequer from a sudden termination of the dues on a particular afternoon or day. The contempt with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had received the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's could not have been due to misunderstanding the arguments and calculations of the right hon. Gentleman. It must have been owing to a sudden alarm at the overthrow and disturbance of all his (the Chancellor of the Exchequer's) structure in consequence of the discovery made by the Member for St. George's. That was the only way to account for the Chancellor of the Exchequer's unworthy and unappreciative reception of so valuable a suggestion as that of the right hon. Member for St. George's. He (Mr. Cohen) would not imitate the example of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by going into the question of motives, but in a Budget of this kind, which depended on so small a margin for its final balance, and in which it was not possible to fix as approximately as usual the actual yield of the new sources of income, the Member for St. George's merited the gratitude rather than the scorn of the right hon. Gentleman for recommending caution. Amongst those with whom he was accustomed to associate in the City or on the Opposition side of the House he had not discussed any desire to examine the Budget proposals in a captious spirit. They recognised the difficulties under which those proposals had been framed, and, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would but meet the criticisms of the Opposition in a fair spirit—in a spirit quite the opposite of that which he had adopted that evening—the right hon. Gentleman's financial achievements, unlike the legislative proposals of Her Majesty's Government, might redound to his credit.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said, that everybody who had followed the course of events during the last three years must have come to the conclusion that the late Government had left the finances of the country in an admirable condition to enable the present Chancellor of the Exchequer to make a financial statement which had been generally received with favour. He (Mr. Isaacson) had very carefully examined every detail of the Budget, and when they considered the enormous losses the country had sustained, not only through default in Trust Companies, but in every branch of trade, and when they saw the number of countries which had defaulted in their interest on their bonds—namely, Portugal and Uruguay, France also having reduced her rate of interest, making the poor poorer—they could not but feel that this country had been passing through an unprecedented crisis, and the storm had been weathered in a wonderful manner. He had fully expected a larger deficit than that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced. Taking everything into consideration, in his opinion the Chancellor of the Exchequer had acted, under the circumstances, not unwisely in regard to the Sinking Fund. If the right hon. Gentleman had not done so, he would have had to create an additional tax of some kind to meet the deficit, and it must be admitted that it was an extremely lucky thing that there was the first instalment of dividend from the Suez Canal shares to avail of. He wished that the brewers, and the brewers only, could be made, by some means, to pay the extra tax on beer. The brewers had, year after year, been making enormous profits without reducing the price of the poor man's beer. At the present moment barley was at the ridiculous price of 23s., a price never known before, and if they took the price of the other materials used in the brewing trade, they would find a difference of something like 40 per cent. since 1884. They all knew that whatever tax was imposed on food in this country fell on the consumer. In the case of beer the brewer increased the price to the publican, and, as a matter of course, the publican increased the price to the consumer, or reduced the quality of the beer. He was sorry that the extra tax could not be imposed upon the brewer, and the brewer only. As to the matter of spirits, he represented a very poor constituency, where probably the people had not as many of the luxuries of life as were possessed by many constituencies in other parts of London; and he could not blame them, when he took into consideration the miserable food they had to eat, and the terrible state of trade during the last few years, if they took a glass of beer or spirits, which might constitute the only comfort they had in life. He could quite understand the hon. Baronet the Member for Carlisle (Sir W. Lawson) preaching the doctrine of temperance. That was a very excellent doctrine, and one which they would all like to see carried out, but the hon. Baronet forgot that he never proposed anything by which people could get their tea or coffee at a more moderate rate. It was a well-known fact that at almost any railway station one could get an excellent glass of beer for 2d., and a very bad cup of tea and coffee for 4d. As to the Income Tax, inasmuch as nearly everybody's income had been very much reduced of late years, the increase would be much felt, but he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken a very wise course in exempting so many more poor people from the tax, and he should certainly support the right hon. Gentleman as much in that portion of his proposals as in any other. He could not help feeling that a man who was so fortunate as to be left £100,000 by anybody who died must count himself fortunate if he got that amount less 6 or 8 per cent. A legatee had nothing to complain of in having the tax deducted before he received the legacy. As to land, the agricultural outlook was most gloomy, and he thought that any Budget by which the agriculture of this country would be injuriously affected ought never to be allowed to pass. With regard to the mode of taxing foreign securities, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said he felt it a very difficult matter to tax anyone residing in a foreign country but holding a vast amount of securities in this country. The French had a very excellent plan by which they overcame this difficulty. Every coupon held by an absentee from that country was taxed at a totally different rate from the coupons held by *rentiers* living in France. On the whole, in view of the position of this country and of the state of trade, he thought the Budget was a fair Budget, and one which ought to receive the support of the House.

*Sir J. LENG (Dundee) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken was to be congratulated on the fairness of his remarks, and he was glad to observe the tone that prevailed generally on the Opposition side of the House. As to the Whisky and Beer Duties, he would make only one remark. It should be kept in view that that class of taxation was voluntary, and that no one need contribute a penny to it unless he were so inclined. It had been said that the land was to be made to suffer greatly at an inopportune time. The landlords, however, had it very much in their power to improve their own position. He heard only that evening that a considerable landlord in Scotland who had a small farm to let had a number of competitors for it at a larger rent than he had received from the previous tenant. He (Sir J. Leng) had been rather amused to hear the depression in agriculture in the South of England represented as being so great that a number of landlords would be glad to be rid of their properties, and that he might go round the South of England, take over a large number of farms that were going begging, and return a very considerable landed proprietor. He really could not think that agriculture was depressed to that extent. If it were so, he thought he might organise a movement on the part of tenant farmers in Scotland for their migration southwards. He believed that such farmers would be able to make a profit out of land in the South even in these bad times. The Budget had been received in Scotland with the greatest favour. The Scottish people thought it was fair to redress those palpable inequalities of taxation which had hitherto existed between real property and personalty. Although comparatively little was done so far to graduate the Income Tax, what was proposed to be done was regarded as being in the right direction. The graduation of the Estate Duty would go very far to satisfy the public generally as being in the direction of justice and equality. It was to be kept in view that the increase in taxation this year was very much consequent upon the provision that was necessary to be made for putting the Navy in a proper position. There was, on the opposite side of the House, a strong demand for the increase of the Navy. He considered that it was to a great extent necessary that something should be done, but, at the same time, he apprehended that the more we did in that direction the more we should provoke the great Powers on the Continent to follow our example. It would be far wiser, he thought, for our statesmen to take the initiative in endeavouring by diplomacy to establish friendly relations with other Powers, with a view to a reduction rather than an increase of all these armaments. When the Naval Defence Act was adopted the supposition was——

The CHAIRMAN: I think that this cannot be discussed now.

*Sir J. LENG said, he would not pursue that line of remark. He would simply say, in conclusion, that the proposals of the Budget, and particularly those for consideration that evening, had the approval of the people of Scotland generally, and that even the slight increase in the Whisky Duty was not regarded with that dread and horror which some people thought must necessarily be felt in a whisky-drinking country. It was believed that both the distillers and the publicans would survive the slight addition to the duty. It was known that their profits in recent years had been enormous, and, on the other hand, many were of opinion that Scotland would maintain her position even if the production of whisky and, more particularly, the drinking of it, were diminished.

SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) rose to move an Amendment of which he had given notice.

MR. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) asked, on a point of Order, whether the moving of the Amendment would not stop the discussion on the general question?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that would be so. If the right hon. Gentleman likes to give way he can do so.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK intimated that he would be happy to give way, and move his Amendment later.

MR. JACKSON said, he must ask to be allowed to make a few observations in consequence of the remarks that had been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman had insinuated, even if he had not practically stated, that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen), with whom he had had the honour and privilege of serving at the Treasury, desired to curtail the amount of the investments in the Savings Banks. No one who knew his right hon. Friend would for a moment think there was the slightest foundation or justification for such an imputation. It might not, however, be generally known that his right hon. Friend held a very strong view, and he thought wisely and rightly held that view, that there was or might be a very grave and serious danger to the country in having £130,000,000 which might be withdrawn at a time of the greatest difficulty. This was no new view on the part of his right hon. Friend. When his right hon. Friend was at the Treasury he had under his consideration over and over again the question of devising means for inducing the investors in Post Office Savings Banks to take advantage more largely of the opportunity of investing their money in Consols. Under the arrangement made with the Bank of England his right hon. Friend took the opportunity as far as he could of encouraging investments in Consols by means of a system which was automatic, besides being cheap and expeditious. The adoption of that system had resulted in a very large use being made of the opportunity of investing in Consols. He did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer would for a moment question the soundness of the argument that it was not desirable, if it could be avoided, to have so large an amount of money subject to withdrawal at a moment's notice. Besides, there was this important point to be borne in mind, a point worthy of serious consideration. They had recently made a change in the law connected with the Post Office Savings Bank; they had enlarged the limit that any individual could invest during a year. There had been going on at the same time a tendency, under an Act passed by his right hon. Friend for the protection of savings in Trustee Savings Banks, to close a number of those Trustee Savings Banks and transfer the accounts to Post Office Savings Banks. Therefore they had these two movements going on at the same time, and had to look forward, not to the amount of money they had to-day, not to the rate of investment that had been going on for the last 10 years, but they might reasonably look forward to still larger investments made in the Post Office Savings Banks. In view of those important facts, it was a matter of grave consideration and of obligation on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to try to protect the country from so grave a danger. If the right hon. Gentleman could devise means by which he could induce people to make larger investments in Consols without in any way diminishing the inducement to put their savings in the Post Office he would not only protect the country, but encourage the people to save. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had something to say about the Death Duties, and there was only one point that he (Mr. Jackson) desired to mention in connection with the Death Duties. They had heard much of the change which was proposed in the law, to charge in future upon the principal value, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer called it, as against the capitalising of the income. But they had this change in the future; these duties were to be graduated, and according to the total amount would be determined the scale of payment. He thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would admit that the higher the rate the larger the temptation to evasion, and the greater the temptation for a man, say, having £10,000 a year to invest the larger portion of it in the names and for the benefit of his children before his death. He thought it was not at all unlikely that, instead of leaving his wife £3,000 a year for housekeeping purposes, that he might invest the money for her in his lifetime, and trust her to take good care of it. He thought these were real possibilities, and it was possible it would be found that these Death Duties, high as they were, would hardly produce the amount the right hon. Gentleman anticipated. He hoped that the change from annual income to principal value would be made perfectly clear; that an estate of the value of £300,000, but with mortgages upon it up to £200,000, would be charged as an estate representing the value of £100,000.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON was glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a word to say about a criticism made by his right hon. Friend about imposing new taxes for the purpose of enabling the remission of taxes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was rather hard on his right hon. Friend, and pointed to the fact that this had been done on former occasions, and in connection with the great Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, that there had been taxes imposed in order to remove other taxes bearing on the people. No doubt that was true, but he doubted very much whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer could find an instance in the history of the country where, for the purposes of reducing or granting exemptions with regard to a particular tax, this particular tax was raised on the whole nation. Or to put it in another form, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find it difficult to bring forward any example or any precedent for a Chancellor of the Exchequer raising the Income Tax by 1d. in order to carry certain exemptions connected with it. He did not think any instance of that could be found. It was obvious it might be of great advantage to put on an additional 1d. to the Income Tax to sweep away a number of taxes the cost of collecting which might be large, and of which the incidence was borne differently, but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman would find an example analagous to his own action in this particular case. Now let him say a word with regard to these exemptions. The plan adopted by the right hon. Gentleman was to raise the Income Tax from 7d. to 8d., in order to enable him to make certain exemptions. If it were possible to simplify the process by which those who were entitled to abatements should be able to get them, he thought great satisfaction would be given to a large number of persons who knew little of the methods of procedure followed by the Inland Revenue. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the ingenuity displayed in imposing an additional penny on the Income Tax in order to allow five-eighths of a penny to be taken back. He thought that when the taxes were paid it would not be found that the abatements were so large as the right hon. Gentleman anticipated. The right hon. Gentleman took credit for having given a boon, as he called it, to those who paid under Schedule A. No doubt it was a boon, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman did not wish that it should be thought that the Income Tax payer under Schedule A, as regarded land, was going to pay less under the new system than he paid under the old, because, so far as he was able to estimate it, it might be stated thus: The right hon. Gentleman put on an additional 1d. and he allowed 10 per cent. to be taken from the gross value. Take a property of £1,200 a year; the Income Tax which the owner would be called upon to pay would represent at 8d. £40 a year. The right hon. Gentleman proposed to allow him to deduct 10 per cent., which would bring it to £36, whereas if he paid on the gross sum at 7d. he would only pay £35 a year, therefore the great boon amounted to an additional payment of £1 a year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman has omitted one class upon whom this remission will have a large effect, and that is the small householder whose income is under £500 a year, and who exists to an immense extent. I received a letter the other day from one of these householders, in which the writer said—

> "The news is too good to be true. I have invested my money in house property, and it costs me about 8 per cent. in repairs. I am told I am going to have an allowance of 10 per cent., and the news is too good to be true."

I wrote back to say—

"The news is better than you believe; you will get 16⅔ per cent."

Mr. JACKSON said, he must confess he was limiting his observations to the abatements to be allowed to those who paid under Schedule A on land. It was true as regarded houses, and here he might say that he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would arrange his plan so that, where land and houses formed part of the estate, there should be no difficulty in arriving at the value of the one and the other, because he could foresee some difficulty where a man had taken a house, say, with 100 acres of land, the rent of which was fixed for the whole of it, there being no separate tenancy as regarded the land and the house. Unless some arrangement were made for the apportionment of the rental of the house and upon the land separately, he did not quite see how the separation would be made.

*Sir W. HARCOURT: I can tell the right hon. Gentleman at once what will be done. In a great number of cases the allowance is 10 per cent. for land with houses, but on land without houses it is 5 per cent., and I should be extremely glad to make it 5 per cent. on land and 10 per cent. on land with houses.

Mr. JACKSON said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to be in an extremely conciliatory mood, and was prepared to take anything from that side of the House that would give him a little more money. With regard to the allowances on houses, the right hon. Gentleman proposed to allow one-sixth. No doubt that was a considerable advantage as compared with the position in which these people had been placed hitherto; but he noticed that the right hon. Gentleman did not contemplate any advantage going to the person who paid the rent, but all going into the pocket of the owner. Even in the case of the very large abatement of 16 per cent., the additional penny which was previously to be imposed would absorb from 11 to 12 per cent. of it. He must say a word with regard to the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to spirits. He thought that anyone who knew anything about trade would agree in this, that there was nothing so injurious to trade as uncertainty as to what was going to happen. He admitted that, in one sense, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had removed that uncertainty, but he did not think that having removed the uncertainty he had placed himself or his Budget in any better position. He said he thought the right hon. Gentleman had to some extent removed that uncertainty, because he thought the country would understand that the right hon. Gentleman had yielded to the pressure and had announced his decision that the 6d. additional duty he was going to put on spirits was to cease on the 31st of March. But the country would understand not only that it was to cease on the 31st of March, but that the right hon. Gentleman, if in his present position next year, would not reimpose it.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Certainly not.

Mr. JACKSON thought that the right hon. Gentleman had made a very important admission. Those who looked upon the tax as for one year only would now understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he were in his present position next year, meant to reimpose the tax.

Sir W. HARCOURT: No, no.

Mr. JACKSON said, the right hon. Gentleman could not have it both ways.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg pardon. The right hon. Gentleman says, first of all, that I will not reimpose the tax, and then that I will. On the contrary, I have said that I will keep the question entirely open.

Mr. JACKSON said, the right hon. Gentleman would, at all events, allow him to differ in opinion with him. He would put it in this alternative way. Take a man engaged in this business; he had, at all events, the chance that the right hon. Gentleman would not reimpose the tax next year, and, therefore, the whole inducement to a man in the trade was that he should take as little spirits out of bond during the current year as possible.

Sir W. HARCOURT; What do you say to tea?

Mr. JACKSON said, he remembered that when at the Treasury they had a great run on tea before the Budget. But the Tea Duty did not expire with the financial year. Now that the right hon. Gentleman had announced that the Spirit Duty was to lapse on the 31st of March—not on the Budget day, but before it—no one would make large clearances before the end of the financial year, but would defer as far and as much as they possibly could taking out their delivery until after the 31st of March.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman seems to forget that all this on which he wastes his indignation applies equally to the Tea Duty, which ceases on the 31st of March.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): No; on the 31st of August.

MR. JACKSON thought the right hon. Gentleman would see that he was perfectly justified in the view he was taking; that the very illustration of tea which the right hon. Gentleman himself put forward was protected by carrying on the duty proposals to avoid the difficulty of the lapse of duty, and yet here they had the fact that the right hon. Gentleman, in deference to pressure that had been put upon him—[*Cries of* "Oh!"]—he did not say it in any offensive way, he hoped, but he meant the right hon. Gentleman had found himself justified in yielding to the representations made to him, and had publicly pledged himself that this duty was to cease on the 31st of March.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No, I have not.

MR. JACKSON said, that in answer to a question from that Bench to-day the right hon. Gentleman said it was to cease at the end of the financial year.

SIR W. HARCOURT: No, no.

MR. JACKSON said, that was what the right hon. Gentleman said in answer to a question. But it was of interest to every Member in the House that the Revenue of the country should not be placed in this unfortunate position, and, therefore, if he had succeeded in clearing up what was doubtful, he had gained some advantage.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for raising this point. All I am pledged to is this—not at the present time, and during the inquiry into the incidence of this tax, to make this a permanent tax. I am not pledged in any way to make the Spirit Duty end on any particular day. I shall adopt whatever course may be most convenient and safe for the Revenue.

MR. JACKSON was sure they were very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his explanation, because he thought the right hon. Gentleman would see that if he had stated the case as strongly as it was supposed to be—namely, that the 6d. additional duty was not to extend beyond the present financial year, that it must have ceased and ended on the 31st of March, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman would see, in view of the Budget not being introduced before the 31st of March, that would be an impossible date unless the Revenue of the country was to suffer a large diminution. In connection with that, he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would look carefully to the terms of his Resolution with regard to the Spirit Duty, and see what time it had been taken up to, or, at all events, would see it was made clear in his Bill that he was not going to tie his own hands without knowing it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Resolution has no date. I shall carefully consider in the Bill what is the proper date, but the Resolution covers a perpetual date.

MR. JACKSON said, that if the Resolution was so drawn, and the Bill followed the Resolution, and if there were no pledges which the right hon. Gentleman felt himself under—if he had given no answers to questions which placed him in any difficulty—then, of course, the objection with regard to this to some extent fell to the ground. He ventured to say that even the announcement that the right hon. Gentleman's mind was an open one on the question, in view of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman had already across the floor of this House stated, in answer to questions put by Irish Members, that the tax was only to be for a year, he thought that would be interpreted by everyone in the trade that, at all events, they had a chance that the 6d. would not be imposed next year, and therefore would delay, as much as possible, the clearance of spirits during the current year. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the 6d. as being a comparatively small amount, but when they considered that an additional 6d. was a charge upon an article that did not represent in value more than something like 2s. 6d. or 3s. per gallon to the manufacturer of the article, if the right hon. Gentleman was going to take it out of the pockets of the manufacturer he would be taking away something like 20 per cent. in the value of the article. That was a considerable sum, and he did not think it was likely to come entirely out of the pocket of the manufacturer, but would be borne by the consumer of the article. He repeated, he was glad to hear what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had now said, because his speech and his careless dealing with the important question of the Revenue of this country had left the impression upon his mind that the right hon. Gentleman did not intend to occupy his present position next year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I most sincerely hope not.

Mr. JACKSON was sure that so far as the right hon. Gentleman personally was concerned they should be glad to see him occupying that position, but politically it was quite another question. He was glad if he had tended in any way to make clear what was in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's mind, and which he thought was not clear to the House before.

Mr. GOSCHEN observed that it was desirable that the point which had been raised should be cleared up. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when asked whether the additional tax on spirits was to be imposed only to the end of the financial year, said—

> "I have already answered a question in the House to that effect."

There was an impression in the House that the right hon. Gentleman had distinctly stated that the tax was to be imposed to the end of the year. If that was not the Chancellor of the Exchequer's purpose he could only imagine that the right hon. Gentleman had since changed his mind. The right hon. Gentleman would, no doubt, feel it to be his duty to remove any misapprehension that might exist on the question, and the Committee ought to know now whether the duty was to be imposed only up to the 31st of March or up to the end of the financial year.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway) said, he always understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to speak exactly in the sense in which he had spoken that night. The right hon. Gentleman had not pledged himself to take off this 6d. or not to put on two or three sixpences next year. It was at all events clear, from the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, that that was the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman's mind was left perfectly open on the question. As to whether the date should be the 31st of March, the 31st of May, or the 30th of April, was a detail which he did not suppose anybody would bind the Chancellor of the Exchequer to. He must say that this continual habit of mounting up the duty on Ireland sixpence by sixpence was becoming fearful. He did not know whether he would not sooner have 5s. put on at once instead of this continual increase of it by sixpences. No licensed victualler knew how much he was to charge a glass, and no one knew whether to give up whisky and take to some other form of alcoholic refreshment. He knew of no other article which was taxed so much as whisky. ["Tobacco!"] Yes, it was a dreadful thing taxing tobacco so much. He got no consolation from the fact that beer was taxed 6d. a barrel, because the Irish equivalent to beer was porter, which would also be taxed to a like extent. He thought this was a flaw in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget. They might all be unanimous as to the right hon. Gentleman's proposals if he would drop this little addition to the whisky and porter. They knew the object of this tax. He would merely say that it was to get five ironclad ships. That was a laudable object, but he thought it was rather hard on the Irish taxpayer who, perhaps, got the least value out of the ships that he should have to pay the principal. The amount was very considerable. If it fell on the consumer £100,000 a year additional duty would be extracted from Ireland, but if it fell on the producer—a good deal of whisky being exported from Ireland—it would amount to £200,000. To extract such a large amount each year from a poor country like Ireland would seriously affect the general prosperity of that country. Taking whisky and porter together, this increased tax would represent an additional taxation on Ireland of between £175,000 and £250,000. He objected to this very strongly. It would be different if the country was to have a share in the expenditure of the money so raised, but unfortunately Ireland would reap little or no benefit from it. They had no working dockyards in Ireland, and the money raised from Ireland by means of the whisky and porter would go to enrich the already comparatively rich working people at the dockyards in England. There was some time before the Budget Bill was passed, and he trusted the Chancellor of the Exchequer would reconsider his decision in this matter, though he was afraid he would not. The right hon. Gentleman, in replying to the hon. Member for Dublin the other night, pointed out that Irishmen did not pay as much taxation on alcoholic liquors per head of the population as Englishmen and Scotchmen, and he seemed to think they ought to screw up the Irish taxpayer. There were two ways of screwing him up. The first was by encouraging him to drink more, and the second, by making him pay more for what he did drink. The latter was the way adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Irish people were very temperate, more so than the English people, and very much more so than the Scotch people. That was shown by the statistics. However, he had no great belief in these statistics, and he would acknowledge that if Irishmen had as much money in their pockets as Englishmen and Scotchmen they would drink quite as much. He claimed no superior virtue for the Irishman on that point, who, he believed, was pretty much in the same boat as the Englishman and Scotchman. Of course, the Scotchman was a little farther North, and ought to drink a little more. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think he ought to get rather more per head out of the population of Ireland. That was a very bad prospect for the Irish people. He dared say that by the imposition of this large tax upon whisky they would drive the people from whisky into porter. That was bad for the distillers. England used to drink claret, and then, for political reasons, it was forced by politicians and statesmen to drink Spanish wines, and it took to port and sherry purely politically, for the moment the right hon. Member for Midlothian took off the duty on claret the people began to revert to their original taste for French wines. They could, therefore, change the tastes of a people by taxation; but he held that the taxation proposed was likely to very much deteriorate the whisky trade in Ireland. There was a spirit called German spirit, which was very bad and very cheap. There was a way for the producers to recoup themselves for this extra 6d. For instance, if they put more of this German spirit in the Irish whisky they would produce a cheaper article, and he was afraid more German spirit would be put in, people thus getting bad German spirit instead of good Irish whisky. One of the chief productions of Ireland would be very much injured by this increase of 6d. It was with great regret that he pointed out any blot in the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman, and he asked him to reconsider his position and see if it was not possible to take off or postpone the tax on porter and whisky.

*SIR W. HARCOURT was happy to hear that the hon. and gallant Gentleman understood his (Sir W. Harcourt's) statement exactly in the sense in which he made it. First of all, it was not proposed to make this duty a permanent tax, leaving it a perfectly open question whether it should be renewed in another year or not. He had not fixed a date for the termination of the tax, and whether it would be again renewed would depend upon the considerations which might be properly urged against such a course. In the Bill the date would be fixed, and it might still be an annual tax, just as the Tea Duty was now. It might be renewed every year, just as the Tea Duty was. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had very properly reminded him that the Tea Duty was fixed to continue considerably after the determination of the financial year. He thought that was a very proper matter to consider, and he was very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman opposite for having pressed upon his mind the importance of that being done in this case. He could assure him the matter should not be lost sight of. He hoped, therefore, it would not be thought necessary further to discuss the Spirit Duty on that occasion, as the matter could be fully discussed on the clauses of the Bill.

SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, he thought that everyone who was present during the earlier portion of the Debate must feel with the Leader of the Opposition that the powerful speech of the right hon. Member for St. George's had remained practically unanswered. That lower rental because he undertook to make the repairs ought to pay Income Tax at a higher and not at a lower rate. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman was really against the right hon. Gentleman's proposition, for he had shown that instead of taxing the English farmer higher than the Scotch tenant he ought to tax the English tenant lower. His right hon. Friend who brought forward the Amendment did not wish to establish any inequality of taxation. He simply wanted to put the English farmer upon the same level as the Irish and Scotch farmers. There was no reason whatever why this anomaly, which was of old standing, should be continued. The English farmer had borne this anomaly for a very long time, and he remonstrated now because of the depressing circumstances through which he was now passing. He did not wish the Chancellor of the Exchequer to commit himself at once to a decision upon this point, but there was an anomaly to be examined and an injustice which ought to be redressed.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I have promised to carefully consider this matter before the clause comes on in the Income Tax Bill, and to give most favourable consideration to the question. If, consistently with the due balance of the Budget, I can give this relief to the agricultural interest in England I will be very glad to do so.

*Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said, there was a good deal to be advanced in favour of putting the Income Tax on English farmers on the same footing as it was in the case of Scotch and Irish farmers. No doubt, in past years this difference was owing to the fact that in the Scotch and Irish leases the tenants agreed to do the repairs. But that had gone out of fashion, and as he believed that all farmers—English, Scotch, and Irish—were now on the same footing in the matter, there was no reason for the difference in the Income Tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had laughed at the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University, and had said that for years and years this difference in the Income Tax had been imposed. The question of this difference between English and Scotch and Irish farmers was raised last year, and the Chanceller of the Exchequer then said he was unable to explain the origin of the difference. Now they had the right hon. Gentleman's assurance that he would consider the matter, and, if the consideration were favourable to the English farmers, they would feel indebted to him. He wished to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the relief given under Schedule A. For several years he had tried to press upon Chancellors of the Exchequer that it was hard upon landlords that they should have to pay the whole tax without deductions for outgoings and repairs. Hitherto landlords has been ignored altogether by Chancellors of the Exchequer, but they would be grateful for this relief of 10 per cent., and only wished it could have been more.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, there might be reason for equalising the Income Tax paid by the farmers of the three countries, but they must also maintain equality between farmers and other traders. Why should there be a Schedule B at all? Why should not farmers, like other people, pay taxes on their profits? By a change made by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, the option was given to farmers to have themselves assessed under Schedule D; but very few farmers had availed themselves of that alternative. The inference he drew was that they found it to their advantage to have an artificial estimate of their income rather than submit to assessment by the Income Tax Commissioners.

Sir J. LUBBOCK said, he was obliged to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having consented to consider the case of the English farmers, and under the circumstances he would not press the Amendment.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, there were other interests to be considered besides those of the farmers; and he doubted whether a case could be made out for relieving farmers from any portion of the Income Tax. When the Income Tax was being raised they could not afford to be specially favourable to any class. What he would suggest was that the Scotch and Irish farmers should be brought up to the same level as the English farmers, rather than the English farmers should be reduced to the level of the Scotch and Irish. The position seemed to him to be this—that while the trades and industries of the country had been subjected to an increase in the Income Tax, farmers were kept at the old rate. Distress prevailed in many industries; and the question might be raised whether exemption could be extended to people engaged in trade as well as to farmers. He thought a special exemption was an injustice to all other taxpayers.

*MR. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.) said, that Scotch farmers were entitled to a lower rate of Income Tax than English farmers, because in Scotland a tenant paid his rent and one-half the local rates; whereas an English tenant paid in addition to his rent the tithe and the whole of the local rates. The Scotch farmer was entitled to consideration, as the teind and the half of the rates were paid by him in his rent.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said, that as the Representative of an English agricultural constituency, he wished to emphasize the fact that an English Radical Member had objected to the reduction of the Income Tax on English farmers. That showed the support Engl sh agriculturists were likely to get from English Radicals. In the present depressed condition of agriculture, when farmers found it difficult to make ends meet, they had a prominent Member of the Radical Party—who really had the dictation of the arrangements of the Budget—suggesting an increased taxation on the farmers, and it, therefore, behoved the friends of the agriculturists to raise a note of alarm, warning them of the mercy they were likely to receive from the Radical Government. He should like to know whether he would be in Order in asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question about the Death Duties, as he would not be able to attend on the night on which the Death Duties were to be discussed.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. A. O'CONNOR): The hon. Gentleman would not be in Order in discussing under this Amendment anything except that which relates to the Income Tax.

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): There is one point in reference to the Income Tax which I am anxious to bring under the notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. With regard to the proposed deductions under Schedule A—10 per cent. being allowed in the case of land and 16 2-3 in the case of houses—I wish to direct the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Report of the Select Committee which sat in 1867 to consider the Valuation Bill, and of which the Secretary to the Treasury and myself are the only surviving Members in the House. It recommended greater reductions and a far larger classification than that adopted by the right hon. Gentleman. It recommended that for rating purposes there should be a deduction of 5 per cent. on land without buildings, of 7½ per cent. on woodlands, of 10 per cent. on land with farmhouses or outbuildings; of 25 per cent. on houses and buildings without land other than gardens when the gross value of these houses was under £8, and of 15 per cent. when the gross value was £8 and upwards; and of 33½ per cent. on mills and manufactories, smelting furnaces, kilns, brickyards, mines, and quarries. That statement shows how very incomplete is the classification proposed by the right hon. Gentleman to do fair justice to all properties comprised under Schedule A. I am aware that in the Income Tax Returns Schedule A is divided into lands and houses, but surely that is not an insurmountable obstacle to a further division, and I do not know why the right hon. Gentleman should not adopt the precise classification which I have just read. Under the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman all houses are to be classed together, but it is well known that small tenement property costs much more in repairs than larger and more valuable property. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give his favourable attention to this point before we come to the discussion of the Bill, so that the deductions may represent what is a proper allowance on all property under Schedule A.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be more in Order that the Amendment of the right hon. Member for the University of London should be disposed of before the Committee proceed further. Do I understand that the right hon. Member desires to withdraw the Amendment?

SIR J. LUBBOCK: Yes, Sir.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said, he should like to say one word on the extraordinary principle which had been laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was that the English farmer should pay 50 per cent. calculated on the gross rent, while the Scotch farmer paid only 33 per cent., calculated on the net rent. A more extraordinary financial arrangement than that he had never heard of. It seemed to him that the Scotch farmer should pay considerably more on the net, and the English farmer considerably less on the gross rent.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON said that, as a landlord in South Wales, he had just signed three leases on the basis of the landlord doing the repairs. He desired to know, therefore, whether the Income Tax was imposed on the basis of the tenant doing the repairs, or on the basis of the landlord doing the repairs? which was a most important consideration in South Wales, where all the landlords did the repairs.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will deal with several of the points that have been raised when the Bill is brought in, but I would now appeal to the Committee to allow the Amendment of the right hon. Member for the University of London to be withdrawn in order to get on with other matters.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The point which has been raised by the right hon. Member for Bristol is one of the greatest importance. It is quite true, as the right hon. Gentleman said, that it is exceedingly difficult to say what the exact allowance should be. The proposals the right hon. Gentleman has submitted, however, would be very much less in the interest of land than those which I propose, though they would no doubt be more favourable to houses. The particular in which the present proposal differs most largely from those recommended by the Committee is with respect to mills, but it will be borne in mind that the cost of repairs in mills is already deducted under Schedule D, which deals with profits. We cannot, therefore, allow the deduction to be made again under Schedule A. I beg to assure hon. Gentlemen that though they assume, altogether unjustly, that the Liberal Party are adverse to the interests of the land, I am not so. I have gone as far as I felt justified in going in making allowances favourable to the views and interests of the landowners, as I regard the land as one of the most important interests, and as, certainly, the most distressed interest in the country. That has been the spirit in which I have dealt with the matter.

MR. BARTLEY said, he thought the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken in regard to the allowance for mills and such like buildings, as everything would depend on the opinion of the officials. In the matter of machinery, and other matters relating to mills, the allowance was often an accidental freak of the surveyor in the district. Sometimes a liberal allowance was made, but sometimes the allowance was not liberal. He thought there should be a definite rule laid down as to what the allowance should be, so that the different classes of property should have a different allowance according to a fair and equitable scale.

Mr. BARTON (Armagh, Mid.) said, that in regard to the Beer Duty they would be able to satisfy the Chancellor of the Exchequer that not merely barley growers but other agriculturists would suffer more than he would admit. He (Mr. Barton) was interested in the Irish brewers. He did not understand how the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to calculate that the duty on beer would only produce £580,000 or £600,000. According to figures furnished to him, the additional Beer Duty would yield to the revenue about £800,000, or £200,000 more than the Chancellor of the Exchequer's estimate.

The CHAIRMAN said, it would be out of Order to go into that question on the Resolution before the Committee.

Mr. GOSCHEN : Are we not on the Budget generally ?

The CHAIRMAN : No. The Income Tax Resolution.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he did not wish to shut out any point on which anyone wanted to have information. With regard to the calculation referred to by the hon. Member opposite he thought the Irish brewers did very well. Guinness's, for example, need not fear a tax of 6d. per barrel on porter. If the hon. Member was right that the duty he had put on would fetch more than his advisers calculated he could only say that he should be delighted to find it so.

Mr. BARTON hoped to be able to show at the proper time that the suggestion that even a large brewery like Guinness's could bear a tax such as that proposed was founded on a fallacy. Guinness's consisted of thousands of small owners, who only obtained a moderate dividend upon their capital.

Sir W. HARCOURT : What per cent ?

Mr. BARTON : Four per cent.

Sir W. HARCOURT : The percentage depends upon what they gave for their shares.

Mr. BARTON said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that there had been a large increase in the amount of beer consumed, but without wishing to dogmatise, from the accounts he had received he believed that brewing had shared in the general depression. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman on some future occasion to give details as to the increase in the duty he had mentioned.

Mr. RENSHAW said, that in regard to the Income Tax in relation to mills and factories he had understood the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that, inasmuch as the repairs of mills were calculated as part of the expenditure of the millowner, the latter were not entitled to special consideration in the matter of reductions on rent. He understood that the millowners kept up the buildings out of revenue, but the question of the assessment in regard to rentals was a totally different question. A millowner assessed by a local assessor at, say, £1,000 a year annually paid Income Tax on the £1,000. As he had understood the suggestion of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol, it was that this £1,000 should be subject to larger reductions than ordinary house property. That, it seemed to him, was a fair contention. It was shown to be fair by the authority the Chancellor of the Exchequer had quoted—namely, that of the Committee presided over by Mr. Hubbard, which sat in 1861. The right hon. Gentleman had not gone far enough in accepting the recommendations of that Committee. He (Mr. Renshaw) thought that if there was to be any re-arrangement of the Income Tax made in respect of lands and house property special and generous consideration should be extended to millowners, who had to incur large expenditure in respect of repairs.

*Mr. JOHNSON-FERGUSON (Leicester, Loughborough) said, he understood the position to be this : When the owner of a mill worked it he naturally included all repairs in his general expenses, and in reduction of his profits and the Income Tax he paid under Schedule D. When, on the other hand, the owner of a mill did not work it, he had to pay on the gross rental, and received no allowance for the repairs he had to do out of the rental. In a case of that sort, he (Mr. Johnson-Ferguson) did not think the 16 per cent. allowed would cover the expenditure. As the right hon. Gentleman had said, in most cases the mills were worked by the owners. Another point he would call attention to was the question of the depreciation of the machinery. If the owner worked it, he could put down depreciation at from 5 to 7½ per cent. as ordinary working expenses. On the other hand, if the owner let the machinery, though he was entitled to a certain amount for depreciation, owing to some Departmental red-tapeism, he did not get it in reduction of his Property Tax—he had to pay the Income Tax under Schedule A in full, and then he had to go through all the wearisome detail of claiming the deduction from the Treasury. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman would bear this in mind.

*Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that the deductions in respect of machinery and things which perished were very inadequate in many cases. Machinery might become obsolete in 10 years—indeed, people who understood the matter thoroughly said that the life of machinery should only be reckoned at eight years. These things became very serious in view of an Income Tax that was a really a War Tax. In the case of mines the Income Tax was charged on the profits without deducting anything, in spite of the fact that the capital originally invested to start the business was perishing every year. A prudent man would always lay by a certain amount of capital to replace the capital which was lost. It might be said that a sufficient amount was allowed for depreciation of machinery, but when they came to other things, of which mines might be taken as typical, it was a hardship that no sort of allowance was given.

Sir W. HARCOURT said, he had paid a great deal of attention to this matter. He was aware it was of great consequence, and he would carefully examine it before it was discussed in the Bill. He hoped that, under the circumstances, the House would now allow the Income Tax Resolution to be taken, as the noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Hamilton) had something to say in relation to a Resolution which would follow.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in "The Income Tax Act, 1853," the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Eight Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Four Pence;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Three Pence.

Amendment of Law.

Resolved, That it is expedient to amend the Law relating to the Customs and the Inland Revenue.—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Suez Canal Shares.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of all dividends or other moneys received by the Treasury after the 1st day of July, 1894, in respect of Suez Canal Shares."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): This may be a convenient opportunity to obtain from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer a little information—information which he showed considerable reluctance to give me last Session. We understand that the whole capital value of the Suez Canal shares—£4,000,000—bought 19 years ago has now been repaid to the Treasury by the Sinking Fund, so that the 176,000 shares purchased in 1875 are now the property of the nation without having cost the nation a farthing. Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer assent to that?

Sir W. HARCOURT assented.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Then, the second point is this: These shares, we understand, are now entitled to the whole dividend payable by the Suez Canal Company.

Sir W. HARCOURT : Yes; after July 1.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : That dividend, I understand, is reckoned at about 15 per cent.—that is to say, that nearly £600,000 will come into the British Exchequer from that source this year.

Sir W. HARCOURT . Only half this year.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : From the 1st of July it will come in at that rate. So that these Suez Canal shares, the purchase of which was described at the time by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian as a snare and a financial delusion, and which was denounced by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer in stronger language, are now the property of the nation without having cost the nation a single farthing. They are worth some £18,000,000, and are bringing into the British Exchequer from July 1 of this year some £600,000 a year.

Sir W. HARCOURT assented.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT : Having obtained that information from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for which I express my gratitude, I will not further trouble the House.

Resolution agreed to.

Imperial and Naval Defence Acts.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of any sum by which the aggregate payments made to the Naval Defence Account, under section two of 'The Naval Defence Act, 1889,' may exceed the actual expenditure on contract ships authorised by that Act; and to provide that the further instalments payable to the said Account under the said section shall cease."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*Sir W. HARCOURT : I would explain that under the Naval Defence Act the Treasury were empowered to borrow on the Annuity of £1,428,571, sufficient to enable them to meet the authorised expenditure of £10,000,000 on contract-built ships. The amount so borrowed between 1889 and 1893 was £3,146,000. This sum, together with the five instalments of the Annuity, amounting to £7,142,857, was paid into the Naval Defence Account, making a total of £10,288,857. There was thus paid to that Account £288,857 more than the £10,000,000 authorised. Under the present law, that £289,000, would have become applicable to repay the loan of £3,146,000. But as the whole of the loan is, under the Budget proposal, to be paid off by the Sinking Fund, the sum is not wanted for that purpose. So I propose to restore it to the Exchequer. It becomes a sort of benefit of which I have laid hold.

Lord G. HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his explanation, which anticipates, to some extent, what I have to say. The right hon. Gentleman has at least 10 times asserted that so long as he is Chancellor of the Exchequer he will meet the Expenditure of the year out of Revenue, but he has borrowed £289,000 for the purpose of meeting the Expenditure of this year, increasing the Debt in the Consolidated Fund by that amount, and consequently has violated in the most open manner the solemn pledge he has over and over again given to the House. The transaction is really a very simple one. Under the Naval Defence Act a certain expenditure was authorised which was to be contracted for in five years, and the Annuities to cover that expenditure were to run for seven years. The expenditure of the first five years was in the form of grants, paid out of income, and the difference between expenditure and income was made good out of advances made by the Treasury, but Parliament provided that as the balances accrued they should be applied to the reduction of the advances made. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is attempting to wind up this account in a manner never heard of. There is £1,146,000 deficiency on one part of the account, and he transfers that to the Consolidated Fund, and these subsequent Resolutions make the Consolidated Fund responsible for the payment of the principal and interest of the debt so transferred. Then he turns to the credit side of the account, and quietly collars

£2,000,000, which has absolutely nothing to do with the Revenue of the year, and pitchforks this into the Revenue, and so establishes a surplus of £1,291,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, therefore, is deliberately creating £289,000 more debt than would have been created if the present Act was allowed to run its course. I say that such action as that is unheard-of and altogether indefensible. Now I propose to amend this Resolution in such a way as to provide that while the Chancellor of the Exchequer should wind up the Naval Defence Act, it shall be done in such a manner that only the actual deficiency on the account shall be transferred to the Consolidated Fund. If the Resolution is carried as it stands, it merely amounts to a manipulation of accounts for the purpose of manufacturing a surplus for the forthcoming year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will agree with me that great care should be taken not to interfere with the intention of Parliament in these matters. If proceedings of this kind can be permitted, there is no reason why the right hon. Gentleman should not bring the whole of the Sinking Fund into his Revenue for this year. I am aware that this is a complicated matter, and I know also that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had a great deal to do in the preparation of this matter; but I am sure if he has looked into the matter he will know that my statement is accurate. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer finds out that I am accurate in my statement, he must assimilate his practice to his professions, and accept my Amendment, and wind up the Naval Defence Act without pitchforking into the Revenue of this year £289,000 which does not belong to it, and which can only be appropriated by a similar increase of the National Debt. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will accept my suggestion, and so act in accordance with the unbroken practice of the Treasury and of Parliament in dealing with funds of this kind.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "expedient," in line 1, to the word "and," in line 4, in order to insert the words

"To close on the 31st of March, 1894, the Naval Defence Account as established by Section 2 of 'The Naval Defence Act, 1889.'"—(*Lord G. Hamilton.*)

Lord G. Hamilton

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question?"

*SIR W. HARCOURT: The proposal of the noble Lord is that I should agree to the creation of a deficit. I regard this Resolution as the corollary and natural result of putting an end to the Naval Defence Accounts. If the House is of opinion that they would like a Budget of this character to create a deficit, of course it is open for hon. Members to vote for the noble Lord's Amendment. The Amendment of the noble Lord is absolutely fatal to all our proposals, and I cannot consent to a course which would produce a deficit instead of a surplus for the year. When the noble Lord talks about winding up the Naval Defence Accounts in this way, he knows that it would throw the great responsibility upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer of raising another £2,000,000 by taxation. I must leave the House to judge as to the wisdom of a proposal of that kind.

MR. GOSCHEN: The deficit with which the right hon. Gentleman has threatened the House would not be created by the action of the noble Lord. The deficit is there already, and is the result of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own proposals. The right hon. Gentleman gets rid of it by applying a portion of the funds of the country, which last year and not this year was intended for payment of debt to the Revenue of this year. There never was a more extraordinary revelation of strange methods of finance. The Sinking Fund of last year is applicable to the reduction of Debt this year; but I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman proposes to bring in a portion of the Sinking Fund of last year to meet the expenditure of this year. There is just as much statutory provision made for the payment of this debt, which the right hon. Gentleman calls mine, as for the other which belongs to the right hon. Gentleman and his predecessors. He forgets that in regard to the Localisation of Forces Bill precisely the same course was followed by his late Chief. I should like to know what the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the

Member for Midlothian would be in reference to a transaction under which money which ought to have been used for payment of debt last year is diverted from its object and thrown into the income of the current year. The right hon. Gentleman closes the Naval Defence Accounts a year back instead of closing them now, so that he may collar the assets which should have gone towards the reduction of the debt. The Naval Defence Act had £289,000 applicable to it last year, and therefore the debt which has been transferred should have been that much smaller. But that does not suit the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He wants to keep the assets that ought to have been raised last year, and so he magnifies the debt. I compliment him upon the ingenuity of his device. With reference to the observation made earlier in the evening. I may say that if I have attacked the right hon. Gentleman's financial purity it is because he has insisted so much upon possessing it. He treats me as a miserable sinner in that respect, but I have never set up these high doctrines of the right hon. Gentleman; and what is ridiculous is that awhile making these professions the Chancellor of the Exchequer is taking funds which belong to last year, and which ought to have been paid in that year, and appropriating them to the purposes of this year. I am only surprised that the authorities at the Treasury, who are extremely severe in maintaining the traditions of their Office, should be a party to something which entirely upsets every principle of finance, and lend their sanction to a plan which will be an encouragement to subsequent Chancellors of the Exchequer to ease their expenditure by taking assets which are set apart for the payment of debt and transferring them from one year to another. I am glad that attention has been drawn to this matter. When we have the Bill before us we shall see what course we shall take on this matter.

*MR. COHEN said, that he thought before a ready assent was given by the House to the arguments offered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer he should bring forward some stronger ground than the mere statement that he had included sums which properly belonged to last year's finance in order to equalise his Budget.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's had diminished the reduction of National Debt in order to remedy taxation. The surplus must have gone to the reduction of Debt; but, as a follower and an admirer of the finance of his right hon. Friend, he should be sorry to believe that there had been any shortcoming in the diminution of the National Debt, and he did not believe it; and in order to prove it he would like to point out one or two facts to show——

SIR W. HARCOURT: I would ask, Mr. Chairman, whether this is in Order —to discuss the diminution of the National Debt under former Administrations?

SIR R. TEMPLE: I am merely answering what the right hon. Gentleman said. If it was in Order for him to make this attack upon this particular portion of the finance of his predecessor——

THE CHAIRMAN: We have passed from the general discussion, and hon. Members must confine themselves entirely to this Amendment.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he thought it ought to go out to the public that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had set up so high a standard of financial purity, had had to acknowledge the borrowing of £289,000, without which, as he had told them, they would create a deficit which would be absolutely fatal to the finances of the year. He thought it was an interesting result of the somewhat long discussion which they had had that they had come to the absolute conclusion, acknowledged by both sides of the House, that the only way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could manage to balance his Budget was by borrowing this sum which he admitted did not belong to the income of the year. He thought they would remember this in the future when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, being in opposition, was criticising the financial proposals of a Conservative Government.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, this was not the only amount which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had availed himself of arising out of the

Naval Defence Act of 1889. Had it not been for the Naval Defence Act of 1889 and the Imperial Defence Act, which had been so much censured by the right hon. Gentleman, his position this year would have been that he would have had to provide £2,000,000 more in his Budget than as a fact he had had to do, for he had taken advantage of sums of money provided by his predecessors, including this £289,000, and the annuity of the Naval Defence Act, amounting to £1,429,000, as well as the Suez Canal dividend of £260,000—he had taken advantage of these sums which were intended by his predecessors to extinguish Debt to assist his Budget in the present year; and instead of applying these sums to the extinguishment of Debt, he had applied them to the year's expenditure, and had gone to the Sinking Fund to pay off the very Debt that these moneys were intended to provide out of taxation. The whole scheme was an indirect one for meeting the obligations of the year largely out of the Sinking Fund. It was clear that had it not been for the income coming to the Chancellor of the Exchequer through these three provisions—the Naval Defence Act, the Suez Canal Shares, and the surplus of the Naval Defence Act of £289,000—he would have had to provide additional taxation to the extent of nearly £2,000,000. That was fairly shown by the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. In that statement the total expenditure of the year was placed at £94,175,000, which was the amount arrived at after allowing for differences made by reason of the Imperial Defence Act and the Naval Defence Act. Therefore, they had a statement of expenditure set out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer distinct and separate from the Imperial Defence Act and the Naval Defence Act. What would have been the revenue had these Acts not existed on the basis of last year's taxation? They had had it stated at £90,956,000. That sum included the provision made for the Naval Defence annuity of £1,429,000. So the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself in this position, had there been no Imperial Defence Act and no Naval Defence Act, of having a revenue on the basis of last year's taxation of £89,527,000 as against his expenditure of £94,175,000, so that his deficit would have been £4,648,000. Towards that deficit all that the Chancellor of the Exchequer provided for in the shape of new taxation was an amount of £2,670,000, leaving a deficit of nearly £2,000,000, of which he had already spoken. By this fortuitous circumstance of the existence of a Naval Defence Act and an Imperial Defence Act that short provision which the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been met with was made up by the annuity under the Naval Defence Act of £1,429,000, by the Suez Canal shares dividend of £260,000, and by the surplus amount on Naval Defence expenditure of £289,000. So that, in his opinion, the whole Budget was nothing more than a clever electioneering Budget. It was one in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer took advantage of the legislation of his predecessors, so far as they assisted his present Budget, but at the same time he was not generous enough to acknowledge the advantages he had received from the amounts coming to him by reason of the existence of the Naval and Imperial Defence Acts.

Lord G. HAMILTON said, he was very much disappointed at the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had hoped that when the matter had been pointed out to him he would have accepted the Amendment. His defence appeared to be that unless he was allowed to borrow these moneys in the way he proposed his Budget would be upset. He could only say that he trusted everybody had heard the right hon. Gentleman's defence, and that it would be remembered. Under the circumstances, he would not put the Committee to the trouble of a Division upon his Amendment, but would withdraw it and raise the matter again when the Bill was before the House.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment into the Exchequer of any sum by which the aggregate payments made to the Naval Defence Account, under section 2 of "The Naval Defence Act, 1889," may exceed the actual expenditure on contract ships authorised by that Act; and to provide that the further instalments payable to the said Account under the said section shall cease.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the application of the old Sinking Fund and the new Sinking Fund in paying off the loans borrowed under Part II. of "The Imperial

Defence Act of 1888," and under "The Naval Defence Act, 1889."

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the permanent annual charge for the National Debt, of the interest of the said loans."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.—(No. 125.)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [19th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. PIERPOINT (Warrington) said, he had scarcely supposed the Government intended to go on with the Bill at this hour, as only three minutes were left for discussion. The other night, just before he sat down, he was saying that the Bill granted powers to the Board of Trade, which it already had, and which it already exercised. What would be the effect of putting into a Statute these powers which the Board of Trade already possessed? He supposed that in case of disputes the parties would look upon the Board of Trade as a body to which they might go for settlement, instead of coming to an arrangement among themselves. He suggested that it was very objectionable to do anything in the way of further mixing up officials of the Board of Trade, or any other Department, with trade disputes which might well be settled between the employers and employed by private Boards of Conciliation, which were being established in the districts occasionally affected by trade disputes. Since the Bill was discussed on Friday night they had had an opportunity of seeing an abstract of the Report of the Labour Commission; and he found from that abstract that the Report did not apear to approve of the suggestions made in the Bill. He also found, on looking further into the Bill, that it contained clauses for conciliation; but, as a matter of fact, arbitration was only by inference mentioned once or twice in the whole measure. In Section 2, Sub-section 2, it was mentioned by inference. In Section 3 it was actually mentioned; but the whole effect of the Bill simply was that the Board of Trade should use its offices and try to get localities to form Boards of Arbitration. The Royal Commission approved of giving a Public Department power to appoint an arbitrator to act either alone or with others; but the Bill only contemplated not the appointment of arbitrators, but of conciliators.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

MR. BARTLEY said, he wished to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the President of the Board of Trade had not been in the House during the time that this Debate had been going on.

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 176.)

SECOND READING.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked when the Government intended to proceed with the Bill?

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, the Chief Secretary, when the Bill was introduced, said it would be printed within 24 hours, but he had not yet got a copy.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire) said, he was sure the delay had arisen from some cause over which the Chief Secretary for Ireland had no control.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL. (No. 156.)

SECOND READING.

*MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, this was a very important Bill to traders, and they were anxious to know when it would be proceeded with.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BURT, Morpeth) said, the President of the Board of Trade had left the House, but the hon. Gentleman might be sure that he was anxious that the Bill should be brought on as soon as possible.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

WILD BIRDS' PROTECTION ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No 134.)

COMMITTEE.

[*Progress, 19th April.*]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. P. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.) moved to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and asked leave to sit again."—(*Mr. P. M'Hugh.*)

MR. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) said, he should be glad if the hon. Gentleman would allow the Bill to proceed.

MR. P. M'HUGH said, there were some provisions in the Bill to which he could not agree.

Motion agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

RELIGIOUS TESTS (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 48.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, he objected, as there were provisions in the Bill to which he could not assent.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

SOLICITORS' EXAMINATION BILL. (No. 112.)

Read the third time, and passed.

LONDON STREETS AND BUILDINGS BILL.

Ordered, That Mr. Kimber be discharged and Mr. P. M. Thornton be added to the Committee on London Streets and Buildings Bill.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*).

VOLUNTEER ACTS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the working of the Volunteer Acts, and the legal status and obligations of Volunteers serving under them.—(*Mr. Secretary Campbell-Bannerman.*)

RAILWAY COMMISSION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Albert Rollit, Bill to amend the constitution, powers, and procedure of the Railway Commission, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Dr. Hunter, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Channing, Sir Alfred Hickman, Mr. Burnie, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Field, Mr. Jacks, and Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 185.]

POLICE (COUNTIES AND BOROUGHS).

Paper [presented 20th April] to be printed. [No 83.]

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

EVENING SCHOOLS.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, he wanted to say a few words upon a matter of some urgency. If he understood rightly, a Code of some importance affecting evening schools throughout England had been nominally lying on the Table for a month past, and, unless they took care, would become law in a few days. If he understood the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Education that evening, this Code had not been printed. If that was so, it would be an unprecedented thing for a Code of that importance to come into effect without even having been printed for the perusal of Members of this House. He submitted that the right hon. Member was bound to take some steps to postpone the operation of the Code until it had been printed and they had had an opportunity of seeing what it contained.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham) said, he found himself in somewhat difficult circumstances in reference to this Code. It had been nominally laid on the Table, but there was delay in the printing. This was the first Evening School Code they had ever had, and they were anxious to give consideration to all the suggestions which were being made. He found, however, that it would be possible to start afresh by laying a Minute on the Table, so that there might be a good month for consideration of the Code. This Minute would contain all the particulars in the Code.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 24th April 1894.

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS BILL.—(No. 13.)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, in moving that the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee, I desire to say a word or two with regard to the Bill. When I introduced it to your Lordships' notice I called attention to the fact that as regards contract debts it proposes to limit the period to five years, and with regard to small debts not exceeding £5 the limit should be reduced to one year. With reference to that part of the Bill which reduces the term of limitation in the case of wrongs, I have received no communication in any way of a hostile character, though I have received some with regard to the change made. With regard to the part of the Bill which deals with contract debts, I have received communications taking exception particularly to the small period of limitation as regards debts under £5. My Lords, no doubt the change proposed is a very considerable one—in the reduction from six years to five. The conclusion I have arrived at is, in the first instance, that to make the limitation for the term of three years applicable generally, and not attempting to deal in quite so drastic a fashion with those small debts, would not be advisable. My own opinion is, it would be a very beneficial change; but I feel it is a matter upon which there may be great difference of opinion. With regard to the objection of the noble Marquess that it might lead to the period of credit given being increased in order that the sum to be recovered might be increased, though that is no doubt a very grave objection, yet I think I should not be justified in acting upon it, although I am not at all inclined to give any encouragement to any desire to increase credit. Therefore, I am not inclined to make that change and put all debts and contracts on the same basis. I have not now made any Amendment to that effect, but I shall propose in Standing Committee a change modifying in the way I have mentioned the proposals I make in the Bill.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD HALSBURY: I do not know whether my noble and learned Friend has taken into consideration what I pointed out on the introduction of the Bill in reference to claims regarding land.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): I shall put down an Amendment with regard to questions affecting land other than trespass, but I will not make it in Committee now. I propose that they should both be dealt with in Standing Committee.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I would venture to point out to the noble and learned Lord and his friends that their recent legislation in favour of putting the agricultural classes more upon the land, either as hirers of allotments or as owners, is rather an argument against the policy to which he is now giving his authority. I do not say that they are the only people who get in debt, but undoubtedly small farmers of all kinds have a great tendency to get into debt, more than other people, on account of the extreme vicissitudes to which their calling is subject. A bad year, or bad prices, or some accident will throw them back on the year, and deprive them of all profit for the year, and they cannot get on at all. They must go into the workhouse unless they can obtain some credit. It seems to me, therefore, the policy of limiting the period of credit, though undoubtedly there is a great deal to be said for it from other points of view, is very much against the policy of encouraging agricultural labourers to devote themselves to agriculture on their own account, which Parliament has so distinctly favoured in recent years. I merely submit this for the consideration of the noble and learned Lord. We shall have opportunities of discussing this matter in Standing Committee and on Report. But I fear that the change is one that will not be altogether for the benefit of the community, and I do not think the noble and learned Lord should trust too much to what seems to encourage him a great deal—that is, that he has had no considerable amount of protest from those who are chiefly interested. It will be a long time before those who are interested in this measure will find out what we are about, and probably—though things do not go as fast in the House of Commons as here—it will be found to have become law before people will discover that they are at all touched by it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): With regard to the proposal I have made to change the term of six years, but leaving it open for alteration to three years or something less than six, the real object I have in view is to limit it to actions in respect of wrongs. That is really the important point; and, as I said before, if there is any real controversy on the question of contracts I would rather confine the Bill to the question of wrongs and leave the other an open question. I would not desire to make it a Bill raising any controversial question, and therefore I would merely confine it to the first part, as to which I understand there is no controversy.

Motion agreed to; Bill reported without Amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LAND TRANSFER BILL.—(No. 19.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, the Bill which I have to ask your Lordships to read a second time is, with one exception—which I will describe to your Lordships presently—precisely in the same terms as the Bill which passed through this House last year, and therefore I do not propose to trouble your Lordships with the arguments which I then urged in favour of the passing of that Bill. The opposition to the measure has come really substantially to one, with the exception which I alluded to before. I desire to speak with all respect to that opposition. I do not entertain the view which some entertain that that opposition is dictated simply by motives of personal gain or by the notion that their professional advantages would be interfered with by the passing of such a measure; but, undoubtedly, those who are concerned in the passing of such a measure are apt on the one hand probably to exaggerate the advantages and benefits of the system in which they had been trained, and on the other hand to exaggerate the supposed disadvantages of any change that may be suggested, and I calculate upon this in the matter to which I have made allusion—namely, the objection with which it has been met. I do not propose to argue the case at any length, because the Bill met with acceptance from your Lordships last year; but I will allude to two or three of the principal arguments which have been adduced against the Bill. It is said that under this Bill the real owner of land may be deprived of it and another person who is not the owner put in his place. But the danger of any such transaction as that will be extremely small; and in any case, when it is shown that hardship is imposed on the owner by his being deprived of the land, the Bill provides a remedy and says that the real owner may still have the land notwithstanding the provisions of the Bill as to registration, but in that case the person deprived of the land would get compensation under the assurance provided. It is provided that a person who is wrongfully kept out of land should get compensation out of an insurance fund. As your Lordships know, at present land may be purchased and the money paid, and the person purchasing may neither get the land nor secure the return of the money. But the Bill secures that under the new system no one shall be dispossessed without compensation being provided. It has been said that the risk of a person getting wrongly on the Register by means of forgery and personation will be considerable. That is a statement easily made and difficult to meet when dealing with a matter of which we have had no experience in this country; but I have information which shows that the danger is very greatly overestimated, because a system of registration, under which fraud or personation might have been practised, has been in operation in the Australian Colonies for a great number of years. There they have insurance funds to compensate persons who suffer from the operation of the system. In New South Wales, down to 1889, 209,824 titles have been placed on the Register, and the total sum paid for compensation over the whole period was £1,172. In Queensland, down to 1891, the number of registrations on transmission was 233,209, and the amount paid out of the compensation fund was £1,500, or at the rate of 1½d. on each transaction. In Tasmania, down to the end of 1891, in 29 years' working of the Act, there were no such cases. In Western Australia, in 16 years' there have been no such cases. This, I think, is strong evidence to show that the fear which has been expressed is not well founded, and that the compensation to be provided will prove to be ample. Then it has been said that the proposed new system will lead to serious delay. Of course, everything will depend upon the arrangements made for working the system; and it may be dangerous to introduce such a system all over the country at once; and, therefore, experience will be gained in one or two instances at first. The Bill proposes that the experiment shall only be carried out by districts, and in that way experience of its working will be acquired gradually, and I am confident that arrangements may be made which will secure that there shall be much less delay than there is under the present system. Fears have been expressed lest the Register should become public. I need only say that there is no intention that it should become public, and, unless there is some reason or purpose connected with the public benefit, I see no reason why it should. As to another objection which has been expressed, I think that anyone watching over the scheme would ill discharge his duties if he allowed it to be worked for the purposes of earning Revenue; that is to say, that the fees might he made too high. It is obvious this ought not to be a profit-making department of the Revenue. My Lords, it is asked, why not leave these matters to be transacted as they are at present—why not let private persons do the work required in the transmission of land as at present—why introduce this system? Nobody has a greater dislike than I have to the gratuitous introduction of officialism, but what the official system has to do in the present case cannot be done by private enterprise at all. The scheme necessarily involves the introduction of officialism, but I have no desire to see it extended beyond what is absolutely required for the initiation and due working of the scheme. There can be no doubt that when land has been a few years on the Register it will not be necessary for anyone to look beyond the Register. At the present time hardly anybody buys land with the right to insist on a full legal title, and I am satisfied that when land has been on the Register for a number of years nobody need look to anything beyond the entry on the Register. That will be a very great advantage. The bankers have expressed the fear lest the raising of money by means of equitable mortgage should become more difficult under this Bill. They think they will not be safe in making an advance to a man who produces, not his deeds, but simply a certificate of registration. I confess I feel the force of that objection, and the only alteration I have made from the Bill of last year was to meet the views of the bankers. The provision enables a person desiring or anticipating the necessity of raising money to have a certificate specially marked for that purpose, and the banker will really be safer in advancing on that certificate than he will be at present in advancing on the deeds. People will be enabled instead of taking their deeds to the banker to take the certificate. I have in that way, I think, without throwing any obstacle or difficulty in the way of the system, met that objection. That is the only alteration I have made in the Bill, and therefore I think I need say nothing more on the present occasion.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

LAW LIBRARY FOUR COURTS, IRELAND, BILL.—(No. 29.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD MONKSWELL: My Lords, this is a Bill to sanction the expenditure of £15,000 for the necessary repairs to the Law Library in Dublin. I am informed that barristers have now to work there very often in a more crowded condition than they would have to work under the Factory Acts. The money is provided out of the Suitors' Fund, following numerous precedents in such cases. The Suitors' Fund now amounts to about £6,000,000 sterling. I need only add that the Bill passed through the House of Commons without opposition.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Monkswell.*)

LORD HALSBURY: I have not the least intention of putting any impediment in the way of this Bill; but I cannot help observing that Ireland seems in that respect, and perhaps in some others, to be in a much better condition than we ourselves. The Library of this House, which is the highest Court of Appeal for the Empire, is in about as scandalous a condition as it is possible to be through want of funds, and I desire to take this opportunity of saying that both Ireland and Scotland are much better provided for. In Scotland they have a magnificent legal library, and I think I am justified in calling attention to the fact that this House is very ill-provided.

LORD ASHBOURNE: I can bear testimony to the bad air of the Four Courts Library, and it is the mercy of Providence that anybody carries his life out of it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): As my noble and learned Friend has pointed out, this House is the highest Court of Appeal in the realm, and we are extremely ill-provided with facilities. The books we require in deciding cases are often not to be found.

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

SANITARY CONDITION OF HOWTH AND CLONTARF.

LORD HOWTH, who had on the Paper a Notice to call the attention of the House to the late Reports of Dr. Stafford, Medical Sanitary Officer to the Local Government Board of Ireland, on the sanitary condition of the towns of Howth and Clontarf; and to notice that the Report on Howth was issued by the Local Government Board as an official document meeting their support and

approval, said, he had discovered that the Notice was informal, and, therefore, begged leave to withdraw it, with the intention of rectifying the informality, and bringing it forward again. He intended to move for a certain Paper which had been issued by the Board of Guardians of the Dublin Law Union in reference to a Report made by their sanitary officer on the condition of the towns of Howth and Clontarf. He would ask, with their Lordships' consent, that that Paper be laid on the Table of the House.

***LORD MONKSWELL** said, he had no information on the subject, or whether it was desirable that the Paper mentioned should be laid on the Table of the House.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 18.)

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^a on Thursday next.

COLONIAL OFFICERS (LEAVE OF ABSENCE) BILL.—(No. 25.)

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment; and recommitted to the Standing Committee.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS (BETTERMENT).

The Lord Thring added to the Select Committee.

SOLICITORS EXAMINATION BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 33.)

House adjourned at Five o'clock,
to Thursday next, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 24th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

THE DESTRUCTION OF WRECKS.

MR. MILDMAY (Devon, Totnes): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the Board of Trade are unable to undertake the destruction of wrecks on our coasts, where such wrecks constitute an impediment to the fishing industry, he will consider the possibility of granting such powers to the various Sea Fisheries Committees?

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BURT, Morpeth): My right hon. Colleague, who is absent through indisposition, has asked me to reply for him to the hon. Member. The Board of Trade are not able to admit the accuracy of the proposition stated by the hon. Member. The Trinity House undertake, at the expense of the Mercantile Marine Fund, the removal of wrecks on our coasts where they are an obstruction to general navigation, and, as far as the information at my disposal goes, this work is performed in an admirable manner. The removal of wrecks which are not an obstruction to general trade, but may be an impediment to fishermen only, cannot be undertaken at the expense of the Mercantile Marine Fund, and legislation would be necessary before Committees of Sea Fisheries Districts could be enabled to spend money on the removal of such wrecks. The point will be noted for consideration in the event of any legislation on the subject, but, in the present state of public business, no hope can be held out that such legislation will be undertaken this Session.

FALSE TRADE DESCRIPTIONS.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any progress has been made with the negotiations for convening again the Conference of the International Union of States for the Protection of Industrial Property and the Repression of False Trade Descriptions?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): No negotiations upon this subject are in progress. The next Conference is to be held at Brussels, and the initiative in convening it lies with the Belgian Government, assisted by the Central Office of the Union at Berne. There does not appear to be any reason for urging that the meeting should take place before the Belgian Government have made the necessary preparation and have suggested a date.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: Can any definite time be fixed for re-opening the negotiations?

*SIR E. GREY: As at present advised we do not think any good purpose would be served by pressing the Belgian Government on the subject.

CESS AND STENT.

MR. W. WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he has now received a communication from the Convention of Royal Burghs with regard to the re-arrangement of the taxes of cess and stent; if so, will he be able to introduce a Bill dealing with the subject at an early date?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): A communication from the Convention of Royal Burghs has been received and will be considered, but I am not able to say whether legislation on the subject will be proposed this Session.

SLAVERY ON THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA.

MR. J. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he could inform the House how many vessels of Her Majesty's Navy are now stationed on the East Coast of Africa; what is the approximate annual expense incurred in maintaining this station; how many vessels are required for the defence of the station, apart from all considerations connected with the suppression of the Slave Trade; if he could state what is the computed amount that would be saved on that station if the number of vessels were limited to the requirements of defence only; to what extent could the number of vessels required for the defence of the station be further reduced in the event of the withdrawal of the vessels belonging to other Powers from British protected waters; and what would be the computed amount saved in this event as compared with the present cost?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The number of ships generally stationed on the East Coast of Africa is four, in addition to the five lake and river gunboats on Lake Nyassa and the Shiré and Zambesi Rivers. The cost of maintaining them would require an elaborate calculation, which would involve much time and labour. The Admiralty are unable to form any reliable estimate based upon the hypothesis stated in the four concluding paragraphs of my hon. Friend's question. All that can be said is that if the Slave Trade were to come to an end, the duties thrown on Her Majesty's ships off the East Coast would be somewhat reduced, much in the same way as the abolition of the Slave Trade on the West Coast led to great reductions of labour and cost. Moreover, the money now spent in bounties would be saved.

DEED STAMPING IN IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Stamp Act does not require counterparts in Ireland to be stamped in Dublin; and whether he will state what, if any, is the risk to the Revenue which stamping counterparts in the Belfast office would involve?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Commissioners have ample authority under the sections already quoted to the hon. Member for the practice which exists. It must be apparent that if what is really a certificate by the Commissioners that a certain deed is properly stamped were allowed to be given by any other than experts in Stamp Law, there would be risk to the Revenue. I do not know whether the hon. Member expects that greater facilities should be afforded to Belfast than are afforded to other large cities and towns.

MR. M'CARTAN: I have no objection.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): What is the reason why the officer in charge of the stamping at Belfast cannot also be entrusted with the stamping of deeds; and, further, is there any objection to allow the officer who at present stamps the deeds in Dublin to depute some trustworthy person to look after the stamping in Belfast?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT was understood to say that the counterparts could be presented to the Inland Revenue at Belfast, and then forwarded to Dublin.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman try to get rid of the confusions of this circumlocution office?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: If the hon. Member wishes to run any risk in respect of the Revenue, probably that would be the best way to do it.

MR. SEXTON: What are the places at which counterparts are at present allowed to be stamped?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The only places where these counterparts are allowed to be stamped are London, Dublin, and Edinburgh.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is it not a fact that this stamping raises questions of very great nicety; and can it only be properly done at the head offices?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said, that was so, and the work had to be done by experts.

MR. M'CARTAN: Is all the stamping for England done in London?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes.

NAVAL ALLOTMENTS.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether Lord Farrer's Committee on Naval Allotments has completed its inquiries and reported; if so, whether the Admiralty have decided to adopt the system of paying allotments at the naval ports through the post offices instead of at the dockyards?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Report has been received to-day, and will have the immediate attention of the Admiralty, whose decision will be made known directly it has been arrived at.

GLASGOW LICENSING QUESTIONS.

MR. J. WILSON (Govan): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the proceedings of the Annual Licensing Court in Glasgow, on the 10th and 18th instant, and when, in the interval between the two meetings of the Court, several of the Magistrates reversed their intended votes on the subject of the earlier closing of licensed houses within a certain area of the city, in consequence, it is alleged, of their having been induced to do so by the pressure of interested parties outside; whether he is aware that, in the case of the Magistrate who at the first meeting of the

Court proposed the early closing resolution, and who is a sub-agent of the British Linen Bank, a deputation waited upon the manager of that bank, and informed him that, unless his sub-agent withdrew from the position which as a Magistrate he had taken up, the bank would be boycotted by the spirit trade, not merely in a restricted area, but throughout Scotland; that the manager thereupon intimated to the Magistrate that he must withdraw his proposal or resign his bank agency, and that at the second meeting of the Court this Magistrate voted against his own resolution; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the allegations in the present case, with a view, if possible, of preventing similar occurrences in future?

*Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I have caused inquiries to be made into the circumstances of the case referred to in the question, and I am informed that it is not the fact that the principal agent and the sub-agent of the British Linen Bank, or either of them, were told that unless the latter withdrew from the position which as a Magistrate he had taken up, the bank would be boycotted, or that he must withdraw his proposal or resign his agency. Both these gentlemen say there is no foundation for this statement. It does appear that at the Licensing Court on the 10th instant the subject of the earlier closing of the public-houses was before the Magistrates, and that one of them, who was also the sub-agent of the bank, then made a proposal that within a certain area of the city licensed premises should be closed at 10 o'clock. No vote was, however, taken upon the motion, and the meeting was adjourned till the 18th. In the interval, the Magistrate referred to ascertained that about 80 per cent. of the publicans were favourable to his proposal, provided that it was applied all over the city; but after an interview with others who were opposed to the proposal, he brought these views under notice of a meeting of the Licensing Committee, held prior to the meeting of the Court on the 18th, and after discussion it was resolved not to proceed with the resolution in the meantime, and consequently it did not come before the Court. No threat of any kind was ever made or indicated by the bank, nor was it ever suggested that the sub-agent should either resign his agency or withdraw his proposal.

ENFIELD AND SPARKBROOK FACTORIES.

Captain BOWLES (Enfield): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he will state what is the probable amount of wages to be paid during the coming year at Enfield, and how does that compare with last year; what will be the principle upon which work in future will be given to Enfield and Sparkbrook; and will due notice be given to men employed at Enfield Royal Small Arms Factory of any reduction that is likely to take place.

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Woodall, Hanley): Upon the work allocated to Enfield for the current financial year £160,000 has been provided for wages. The amount taken in last year's Estimates was £120,000, but orders received in excess of those contemplated necessitated a supplementary expenditure of £41,000. In all probability, there will be in the course of the current year demands beyond those yet received, and the amount to be expended in wages will in that event be in excess of that paid out last year; and if there should be a falling off in one class of work, every effort will be made to find employment for the men in other ways. Due consideration will always be paid in the apportionment of employment as equitably as possible between the several factories; but the paramount consideration will, of course, be to place work where it can be most conveniently accomplished. The extraordinary demands of recent years have necessitated the employment of three times the number of hands that sufficed 10 years ago; there is no probability of maintaining production permanently at so high a rate; but the Department will continue to act with the utmost consideration for their *employés*, and the fullest possible notice will be given should it be found necessary to make any considerable reduction in either of the establishments.

Mr. J. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): Is there to be any increase in the buildings at Sparkbrook?

*Mr. WOODALL: Nothing of any importance, and nothing at all so far as manufacturing plant is concerned, but the work hitherto done at the Bagot Street

Repairing Factory has been transferred to Sparkbrook, entailing the provision of additional accommodation chiefly for stores.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES AND SLIGO UNION.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Dennis Leyden, of Creevymore, in the County of Sligo, who is one of the labourers whose applications for cottages were recently rejected by the votes of *ex officio* Guardians in Sligo Board-room against the wishes of the elected Guardians, has been served with notice to leave his house, and have the same closed up, as being certified by the medical officer of health for the district to be unfit for human habitation; and what steps, if any, does the Local Government Board for Ireland propose to take in regard to this and other cases of a similar kind in Sligo Union?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The facts are as stated in the question. The Guardians say that the man named is not an agricultural labourer, and that there are houses vacant in the locality which he would be able to get at a moderate rent. No application has yet been received by the Local Government Board from the persons who signed the representations asking for an Inquiry into the action of the Guardians as required by Sect. 4 of the Labourers' Act of 1891.

OPIUM IN CEYLON.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to a Petition addressed to the President of the Legislative Council of Ceylon, signed by upwards of 27,000 residents in the island, and by all the non-official members of the Legislative Council, praying that the importation of both opium and bhang be prohibited, save through the agency of the Civil Medical Department of the Island, and that their sale be restricted to the regularly licensed apothecaries and dispensers under medical prescriptions; and whether the Government will take steps to give effect to this request?

Mr. Woodall

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Secretary of State has not received this Petition, but he will request the Governor to forward it with a full Report. I may add that the question of restricting the consumption of opium and bhang in Ceylon is already being considered in correspondence which is still passing between the Secretary of State and the Governor of Ceylon.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE CARLOW UNION.

MR. J. HAMMOND (Carlow): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he be aware that, in the matter of a scheme for the erection of labourers' cottages in the Union, the Carlow Board of Guardians had some months since applied to the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order; that some difficulty had arisen, owing mainly to an alteration of sites in certain cases having been recommended by the Government Inspector; that on the 30th ultimo the clerk of the Union had forwarded to the Local Government Board the last of the written consents as to taking such alternative sites; and as there does not appear to be any further obstacle in the way, if he will endeavour to arrange that in the current week a Provisional Order in the matter will be issued?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are as stated in the question. The alternative sites referred to were recommended by the Inspector in order to meet objections raised to the original sites by persons interested in the lands. The Provisional Order to confirm the scheme has now been printed, and will be issued without any unnecessary delay.

THE SAMOAN ISLANDS.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government of New Zealand has made a proposal to take over the administration of the Islands of the Samoan Group; and whether the Governments of the United States and of Germany have yet been consulted; and whether, if so, any statement can be made as to their attitude in the matter?

*SIR E. GREY: I am informed that a telegram to this effect has just been received at the Colonial Office, but it has not yet been communicated to the Foreign Office. I would point out, however, that any proposal such as that described in the hon. Member's question would seem to be inconsistent with the provisions of the Berlin Act.

THE POST OFFICE AND FOREIGN LOTTERY ADVERTISEMENTS.

MR. WEBB (Waterford): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Manchester, I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is prepared to take steps to prevent the distribution by the Post Office of advertisements of foreign lotteries (which pass through our Post Office in a wholesale manner), whilst lotteries are illegal in the United Kingdom, and are subject to heavy penalties?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The subject is one which has occupied my grave consideration, but I am advised that there is no enactment making it illegal to send or carry such advertisements by post; and that without distinct authority I have no power to stop their circulation.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the American Post Office exercises the power referred to in the question constantly?

MR. A. MORLEY: Yes; it is done under a special Act passed two or three years ago.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester): Will the right hon. Gentleman bring in a Bill on the subject?

MR. A. MORLEY: I will consider that question.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in the Report of the Departmental Committee on the subject, it is stated that the disease of pleuro-pneumonia has been known to lie dormant for a period of 15 months; whether it was admitted that the disease existed in Canada in the month of August last; and whether it now exists in the United States of America?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): The Report to which the hon. Member refers states that some of the witnesses the Committee examined had asserted—

> "That they had known cases of the development of the disease after no less a period than 15 months."

I may say that no properly authenticated case of the kind is known to the Veterinary Officers of my Department, to whose statements before the Committee with regard to the period of incubation I would invite the attention of the hon. Member. So far as I am aware, it has never been admitted by anyone that pleuro-pneumonia existed in Canada in the month of August last; and with regard to the United States, I can only say that animals declared to have been affected with the disease have been detected in cargoes landed in this country in such numbers during the past few years as to prevent me from being satisfied that reasonable security against the introduction of diseased animals therefrom exists at the present time.

STROUD SCHOOL BOARD.

SIR J. DORINGTON (Gloucester, Tewkesbury): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been drawn to the requirement of the Education Department, that the Stroud School Board shall build for 200 more children, notwithstanding that the School Board has pointed out that in their existing schools they have vacant places for 300 children; and whether he is prepared to insist upon this expenditure?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): This case has been under my careful consideration. There is a difference of opinion between the Department and the School Board as to the requirements of the case, and the Board have just been asked to take a census of children of school age in order to throw further light on the figures.

SIR J. DORINGTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a census was taken last year?

MR. ACLAND: No, Sir.

MR. BRYNMOR JONES (Gloucester, Stroud): Arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, may I ask is tion of their farms; and whether within the last month, under the order of the Judges, the solicitor having carriage of the sale has not been in negotiation with the tenants for the sale of the farms?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think the hon. and learned Member who puts this string of questions to me must know that it is impossible for me to have knowledge of what he desires, and if he desires an answer he should put the question down. In answer to the question on the Paper, I have to say that during the period mentioned four persons have been imprisoned in connection with evictions and disputes on this estate. One was sentenced to a month's imprisonment, and another to two separate terms of a week and a month respectively. These terms of imprisonment have now expired. The remaining two persons were committed to prison by order of the Court of Chancery, in March of last year, for trespassing on the evicted farms. It was treated as an act of contempt, and they are still in custody. Of course, the hon. Member is aware that the Executive Government has no power whatever to interfere in cases of imprisonment for contempt.

Mr. HAYDEN: What was the actual sentence of the Court?

Mr. J. MORLEY: As I understand, in cases of contempt there is no sentence passed, but the person is detained in custody until he purges his contempt to the satisfaction of the Court.

Mr. HAYDEN: Were they not sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, as a matter of fact?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I believe there was no sentence of 12 months' imprisonment—they are detained until they have satisfied the Court.

Mr. DANE: Does it not appear, from an Order made by Mr. Justice Monroe, that these were persons who took forcible possession of their farms; that they were committed by him, and afterwards let out on condition that they would not go back?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I must ask for notice of that question.

TELEGRAPH OFFICE FOR LOUISBURGH.

Dr. R. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will now establish a telegraph station at Louisburgh, County Mayo, seeing that the

Congested Districts Board and the Westport Union have given the required guarantee?

Mr. A. MORLEY: No intimation has reached me that the Congested Districts Board and the Westport Union are prepared to give a guarantee for a telegraph office at Louisburgh; but perhaps the hon. Member will agree with me that the matter can now be dealt with better by correspondence than by questions in this House.

THE EVICTED TENANTS' BILL.

Mr. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the interval before the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants' Bill, he will consider the propriety of introducing a provision under which new tenants who decline to retire in favour of the former tenant would be obliged to pay to the latter such a sum as the Board of Arbitration would consider to have been the value of the tenants' interest in the holding previous to eviction?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I may say at once that a proposal of this kind has been in my mind, and has been considered very carefully. We do not see our way to introducing such a provision into the Bill; but, of course, to any arguments which may be alleged in favour of the proposal we shall give the full weight to which they are entitled.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman when it is proposed to circulate the Evicted Tenants' Bill, and when the Motion for the Committee on the Irish Land Acts will come on?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Committee on the Irish Land Acts will be moved for to-night, and the names will be submitted to the House. The Evicted Tenants' Bill will be circulated, I hope, to-morrow morning.

THE BUDGET IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can say what proportion of the relief which is given in respect of Income Tax, and which is estimated for this year at £700,000, and ultimately at £800,000, will be derived by agricultural land?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think that £600,000 is the ultimate figure. As near as I can calculate, the proportion will be about £160,000.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

Estate Duty.

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty, in the case of every person dying on or after the first day of June one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four, upon the principal value of all property, real or personal, settled or not settled, which passes, or is to be deemed to pass on or with reference to his death, a Duty at the graduated rates following (that is to say):—

Where the principal value— Exceeds	and does not exceed	At the rate for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100, of—
£100,	£500	One pound.
£500,	£1,000	Two pounds.
£1,000,	£10,000	Three pounds.
£10,000,	£25,000	Four pounds.
£25,000,	£50,000	Four pounds and ten shillings.
£50,000,	£75,000	Five pounds.
£75,000,	£100,000	Five pounds and ten shillings.
£100,000,	£150,000	Six pounds.
£150,000,	£250,000	Six pounds and ten shillings.
£250,000,	£500,000	Seven pounds.
£500,000,	£1,000,000	Seven pounds and ten shillings.
£1,000,000,		Eight pounds.

And, where property subject to Duty at the graduated rates to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution is settled, there shall be levied and paid to Her Majesty upon the principal value thereof a further Duty of £1 for every full sum of £100, and for any fractional part of £100 over any multiple of £100.

In respect of property chargeable with Duty to be imposed in conformity with this Resolution there shall not be levied the Duties following (that is to say):—

1. The Stamp Duties imposed by 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' on the affidavit to be required and received from the person applying for Probate or Letters of Administration in England or Ireland, or on the inventory to be exhibited and recorded in Scotland.

2. The Stamp Duties imposed by section 38 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881,' as amended and extended by section 11 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889,' on the value of personal or moveable property to be included in accounts thereby directed to be delivered.

3. The additional Succession Duties imposed by section 21 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888.'

4. The temporary Estate Duties imposed by sections 5 and 6 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1889.'

5. The Duty at the rate of one pound per centum which would, by virtue of the Acts in force relating to Legacy Duty or Succession Duty, have been payable under the will or intestacy of the deceased, or on or by reference to his death, under his disposition or any devolution from him."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): In resuming the discussion of the Resolution just moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I desire, if the Committee will permit me to intervene for a short period, to notice in the first place an observation which has fallen more than once from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the course of this Debate. The right hon. Gentleman appears to make it a cause of complaint that his benevolent intentions with regard to the agricultural interest in respect of remission of the Income Tax have not received from hon. Members sitting on the Opposition side of the House the recognition which he appears to think they are entitled to. But I am sure of this: that the condition of the agricultural interest is such that those hon. Members who represent it are ready to welcome any and every relief to that interest from whatever quarter of the House it may come, and however small or comparatively small that relief may be. I may, however, point out that the complaints of the right hon. Gentleman were somewhat hasty, if not altogether uncalled for. I have certainly heard expressions of appreciation from more than one of my hon. Friends behind me which I, for one, am not altogether ready to endorse without some qualification, and which were generous in the extreme. The right hon. Gentleman has attempted by a very important, not to say a somewhat ambitious, Budget, to equalise the taxation upon real property on the one hand, and personal property on the other, and at the same time he has endeavoured to redress what is an admitted grievance, a grievance which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman himself would never have disputed for a moment—namely, that hitherto real property has been assessed to the Income Tax upon the gross instead of upon the net value, as is the case with personalty at the present time. I have no complaint to make of that endeavour on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to afford some relief to the agricultual interest. Neither am I disputing for a moment the sympathy which he genuinely feels for the depressed condition of the agricultural interest; but I should like to point out that in equalising the Death Duties between the two classes of property the right hon. Gentleman has been compelled to make a very considerable addition to the burdens on the land, and I venture to say that no Chancellor of the Exchequer having a fair regard to justice would have dared to have proposed a considerable addition to the burdens upon land unless he had accompanied that proposal by an effort to redress that acknowledged injustice to which we have been subjected for so many years. The right hon. Gentleman in the past has recognised that these inequalities must be dealt with, and he would not have proposed this Budget, nor would he have been able to carry it if it had not contained this proposition. I have still great faith in the fairness of the House of Commons at large, and I am convinced that not even the most extreme supporter of the right hon. Gentleman would have been prepared to sanction an addition like this to the duties imposed upon the land unless it had been accompanied by a measure of this kind. Why, in these circumstances, hon. Members who represent the agricultural interest are to be expected to express effusive gratitude to the right hon. Gentleman for having done the barest act of justice towards that interest I do not altogether understand. And it seems to me that there is the less reason for such an expression of gratitude when we come to examine the right hon. Gentleman's proposals a little more closely. What is the extent of the relief that is going to be given to the agricultural land as distinguished from personal property in respect to the removal of grievances as regarded the Income Tax. The right hon. Gentleman himself has fixed the amount at £160,000 per annum. What is the nature of the inequality in the past arising out of this tax as regards land and personal property? A much greater authority than the right hon. Gentleman, in 1853, pointed out to this House the difference of its effect upon the two classes of property to be in this proportion—that an Income Tax of 7d. in the £1 on personal property amounted to a tax of 9d. in the £1 on real property. In these circumstances, I wish the Committee to consider whether an allowance of 10 per cent. upon land which has been conceded by the right hon. Gentleman equals the difference between an Income Tax of 7d. in the £1 upon personal property and one of 9d. in the £1 upon real property? I very much doubt whether that can be shown to be the case. I am confirmed in that impression by a Report that was issued some years ago by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, in which it was calculated that the owner of real property was assessed to the Income Tax on a scale of something like 20 per cent. more than he received.

Sir W. HARCOURT: What Report is that?

Mr. CHAPLIN: I am sorry to say that I have not got the Report before me, but I will get it, and will show the passage to the right hon. Gentleman very soon after I sit down. If the statement in that Report is accurate the allowance conceded by the right hon. Gentleman falls very far short of what it should be. Again, when we have to consider the inequalities of taxation between the two classes of property there is another element which, in common fairness, must be taken into consideration, and which does not appear to have entered into the calculations of the right hon. Gentleman.

Of course, I am now speaking upon the supposition that the right hon. Gentleman in his Budget is seeking to bring about a complete equalisation of taxation upon the two classes of property. The Land Tax now produces between £1,200,000 and £1,300,000 per annum, but that is not all, and it should be remembered that at least half of that tax has been redeemed by a payment of its capital value. The burden of interest which has had to be paid on that capital outlay would bring up the Land Tax to over £2,000.000. All this ought to have been taken into account by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the ambitious and large proposals of this Budget. When the right hon. Gentleman taunts the agricultural Representatives on this side of the House, as he did last night, that the £400,000, or something of the sort, was all that we were called upon to contribute to the defence of our country, and that we had no right to grumble at that, I venture to say that in my opinion such a taunt was wholly unworthy of the right hon. Gentleman. There is no class of persons in the whole country who are more prepared to bear their full and fair share of taxation for the defence of the country or for any other purpose whatever than those interested in land. There are two sides of this question. If the figures which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave last night were correct—and I do not think I am guilty of any discourtesy if I suggest we may entertain some doubt on the point until we have had an opportunity of verifying them for ourselves—they show how greatly diminished must be the value of land at the present time ; and they also make clear the magnitude of the injustice to which the agricultural interests have been subjected for years past, during which realty has been called on to bear the full burden of taxation for objects of national interest, of which personalty has not been called on to bear anything like its fair proportion. The right hon. Gentleman will see that this is a very important branch of the question, and if we are to have a full and fair settlement of this immense subject a great deal will have to be said on it during the progress of the Budget through its different stages. I desire, if I may be permitted to do so, to press upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to urge upon the Committee with great earnestness that, even supposing all the inequalities of which I have with justice complained were removed, the condition of the agricultural interest at the present moment is such that the land is not in a position to bear any additional burdens. Yet I complain, and I think we have a right to complain, that this is the time when the right hon. Gentleman chooses to make a grievous addition to the burdens upon land—a time when we are absolutely unable to bear it. That may be a strong statement to make, but I make it in the most unqualified terms, and before I sit down I propose to give ample proof of it. As the Committee is perfectly well aware, the Royal Commission appointed last year to examine into the whole question has taken already a vast amount of evidence of as grave and as serious a character as was ever submitted to a Royal Commission, and with the permission of the Committee I am going to draw the attention of the Committee to some portions of it. That evidence has either been laid upon the Table of the House, and I believe I may refer to it without impropriety, or will be laid on the Table directly. In regard to the County of Hants, Dr. Fream, one of the Sub-Commissioners, comparing the depression at the present time with that which prevailed in 1879, said—

> "I made a point of asking all farmers, whose experience had been of sufficient length, how the present crisis compared with that of 1879. The answer invariably was that the existing depression is worse—far worse—than of 13 or 14 years ago."

In regard to unoccupied farms in Hampshire, or farms taken in hand by the owners, the witness stated :—

> "The inquiries in this direction reveal a deplorable state of affairs. On several estates, not only are numbers of farms in hand, but much of the land is passing, or has passed, out of cultivation altogether, being merely utilised at times as sheep runs. Old family mansions are let to successful commercial or professional men. . . . . In some localities the land is looked upon as exhausted. In every direction from Andover uncultivated land may be speedily met with. . . . Between Whitchurch and Basingstoke there is an extensive area of land out of cultivation. Much of this land was so burnt up by the summer drought that its appearance forcibly recalled to my mind that of the irreclaimable 'bad lands' south of latitude 49 deg. N. in the Western prairies of the United States. . . . The effect of the depression, the existence of which is unhappily only too fully attested on all

sides, will, it is said, not make itself fully felt until Lady Day or Michaelmas, 1894."

I come next to the County of Essex, and the gentleman appointed by us to inquire into the condition of that county stated to us, especially in regard to four particular districts, that—

> "The land is going out of cultivation or running wild;"

and in another part of his evidence he said—

> "There has been no ebb; the tide of changes has continued to flow steadily in the same direction ever since the days of Mr. Druce's visit (10 years ago). All this took place in spite of repeated endeavours on the part of landlords to encourage and enable them (the tenants) to stay. Rents were reduced, arrears were permitted to accumulate, in many cases they were written off, improvements were made, drainage done, manure given. Yet all to no purpose; farming in Essex had ceased to pay, and capital was gone. Farmers whose fathers and grandfathers had lived in the same holdings, and who were regarded as personal friends by the proprietors, and accordingly treated with the utmost consideration, were compelled to give up, after having reduced themselves to poverty and the land to sterility."

And the same witness (Mr. Hunter Pringle), in his concluding words, pointed out that fresh capital was the only thing that could possibly produce a better state of things, and he added—

> "It is not at all likely that fresh capital will flow into a county where land is taxed and rated out of all proportion to its real value; and, without fresh capital, Essex, so far as its agriculture is concerned, is absolutely lost."

I could read a great deal more about that county, the condition of which, when it is made public to the House, to Parliament, and to the country, will present a deplorable view, and one for which I believe it is impossible to find any precedent in the history of this country for the last two or three centuries. But I will now go to a totally different part of the country—my own county of Lincolnshire—to a small district in which the land is cultivated under conditions which have often been held to be the *beau ideal* of agricultural cultivation by gentlemen who are members of the great Party which I now see sitting opposite me. The gentleman we sent to Lincolnshire examined carefully into the condition of the small holders, and small proprietors, and small tenants in the Isle of Axholme, in Lincolnshire, which has been noted for its fertility, and he stated—

> "Mr. Druce described the small holders as deeply involved and seriously situated in his day, and from all that I have been told, Mr. Druce was absolutely correct in his opinion. Since the date of his Report, 13 years of continued agricultural depression and falling prices have elapsed. With respect to the present condition of those who, at the period of Mr. Druce's visit, were in a struggling position, I found that many have been ruined. . . . The continuation of agricultural depression from about 1877 till the present time has had one unmistakable result in this district. All connected with the industry are poorer, and their credit is gone. Farmers are loaded with debt to merchants, tradesmen, and banks, and their rents are heavily in arrear. Landlords are sorely hit by the great and numerous reductions in rent, and in some cases are almost ruined; indeed, estates burdened in good times do not now bring in sufficient even to pay interest on mortgages."

Mr. Chaplin

I could quote reports from other parts to very much the same effect, but I will only trouble the Committee with one more quotation from the evidence given before the Royal Commission by a man of high reputation in the agricultural world, once a Member of this House, who also occupied a position in the Government. Mr. Clare Sewell Read, whose opinion everyone will treat with respect, dealing with districts in the County of of Norfolk, stated—

> "I may say that the condition of the farmers of Norfolk is verging on absolute ruin and wholesale bankruptcy."

Speaking of the various classes of landed interests, Mr. Read said—

> "We have had a good many yeomen in the County of Norfolk, and I say that they are much the hardest hit of all. They have to bear both the losses of the landlord and the losses of the tenant, and there have been the most disastrous failures."

And, speaking of the landlords, Mr. Read stated—

> "I should think that, taking the County of Norfolk through, three out of four of our country gentlemen do not live in their homes in consequence of their diminished incomes."

I assure the Committee, having access to a great deal of information with regard to the agricultural condition of the country, that I do not believe the extracts I have read offer in the slightest degree any exaggerated description of the general condition of agriculture in many districts at the present time. If that be so, surely this is not a time when any Government, Radical or Conservative, whatever its majority may be, which has at heart the real interests of the country, ought to select as the moment to increase the burden of taxation on land. What is your own cardinal principle? What did the right hon. Gentleman tell us in the able speech we heard the other night. He said—

> "Taxation—and that is our principle and the principle of all economics—ought to be proportionate to the ability to bear it of those on whom it is imposed."

Now, I defy you to name a single class in this country at this moment who are less able to bear increased taxation than the unfortunate owners of agricultural land, who have no other source of income or means of livelihood to look to. Does the right hon. Gentleman wish to close the few remaining houses in which our country gentlemen are able to live, and to banish from their homes those who for for many years, under the greatest difficulty, have been doing their utmost to perform their duties in that station? Does he realise what a loss it is to a neighbourhood in many an English county when the chief house in the parish has to be closed, and the residents have to go away, and it is let to some stranger who has no thought or regard or care for the people of the district? Look at the loss of employment and the loss of wages alone. They are in themselves considerable. But putting this on one side, look at the loss of the thousand and one kindly acts of charity and beneficence which in our English country life, for years and years ever since history can tell, have formed one of its most attractive features, and which have done so much to knit more closely together in affection and regard the different classes which dwell together on the soil. Does not the right hon. Gentleman recognise all this? Of course he does. I know he recognises it, because he is so closely connected with the interest of the land himself; and I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer is perfectly sincere in the expressions of sympathy for that depressed interest he has so often proclaimed in this House. If that is so, what I venture to think and say is that the right hon. Gentleman should have more closely examined and considered the present rural position before selecting the present moment as the time and a fitting opportunity for the introduction of a Budget which, amongst its other incidents, has this unfortunate peculiarity, that it adds to the burden of taxation on land. Let me ask the Committee to consider for a few moments what is likely to be the effect in many cases of this additional tax upon real property in this country. I am speaking now of purely agricultural land. The right hon. Gentleman, upon the first night of this Budget discussion, made this statement. He said—

> "As regards real property, there is no reason in the world why it should be charged on a different rate from other property."

I join issue altogether on that point. I say there are a hundred good reasons why it should be charged differently, in addition to the number of reasons which I have already submitted, I am afraid at undue length, to the Committee. I will go to the very fountain-head of information on this subject in support of my assertion, and will quote the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian himself. In considering this question the Committee must remember that, in some cases, which, under the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman, will probably not be very uncommon, what you are going to do is to impose a duty upon the successors to real property amounting to 18 per cent. on the capital value of the land. Just consider the probable result. What does the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian say? He gave three main reasons against any proposal of that kind. In the first place, he said he objected to it on the ground of the charges to which real property is subjected—the enormous weight of local taxation falling solely upon real property. That was not all. The right hon. Gentleman based his objections on other grounds. He said—

> "I think it is a policy worthy of some consideration, not only to give something that may tend to counteract the special burdens borne by real property, but likewise to take care that you so adjust the payment of the tax in regard to property of that description that you do not allow it to become an engine of great and serious evil by forcing changes in the possession of the land."

Has the right hon. Gentleman taken care to so adjust this duty that it will not become an engine for forcing changes in the possession of the land? I think I shall be able to show that he has done nothing of the kind. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian himself gave an illustration of what he meant on this point. He said—

> "Take a large estate worth some £500,000, with a gross rental of £16,000 or £18,000 a year, and a net rental of £13,000 or £14,000, mortgaged for £300,000; the mortgages would absorb some £12,000 of the rental, and leave but £1,000 or £2,000 a year to the possessor, which will represent the annual value of the life interest, while, at the same time, there would be an excess of capital value over the mortgages reaching to £200,000."

The right hon. Gentleman upon that case said—

> "Now, I think, if you charge upon the capital value, there is no way in which you could meet that case so as not to give the tax the effect and character of an engine for displacing the present possessor."

The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is bound, before this discussion closes, to show to us what provisions he is going to make in the Budget so that this new tax shall not have that effect. The excess value in the case quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian was £200,000. So it might have been in those days, but you may be sure it would be nothing like that at this time, even if there was any excess in value at all. But whatever it may be, I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider how is this duty to be raised and met? How is the unfortunate successor to pay it? I see one thing very clearly, and that is that your Budget will provide the richest harvest for all the money lenders and lawyers in the Kingdom. But, at the same time, it will have this effect—that in case after case where their margin is small it will absolutely ruin the unfortunate holders of land. This raises the only other question with which I want to deal upon this occasion, for we shall have numerous opportunities later of enforcing the views I have endeavoured to urge upon the Committee—I mean the question of the method and mode of valuation which is to be employed in cases of this kind. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the other night made a statement which I heard with great interest and which caught my attention at once. He said—

> "There is no more difficulty in estimating the capital value of real property than the value of pictures or jewels."

[Sir W. HARCOURT: Or of leaseholds.] I grant that he added leaseholds, but I will first take his statement with regard to jewels and pictures. I think in making that statement he was guilty of a fundamental error. Pictures and jewels are valued upon their market value for sale. They pay no rent, and they always possess some market value for sale. That is not the case with regard to land at the present time. I could quote instance after instance in which, while land may possibly still continue to pay some rent, however small, it has absolutely no marketable value for sale at all. That is the fact, and if the right hon. Gentleman possessed agricultural land in many parts of England at the present moment he would know that for the sale of agricultural land, which possesses no advantage for residences or attractions of that kind, the market is absolutely closed altogether. If necessary, I could produce him many instances of evidence given before the Royal Commission over and over again. The reason for this is not difficult to discover, and it is very easy to understand. There is no marketable value in those cases to which I refer for the sale of land for two reasons. Would-be purchasers are afraid of two things—first, the fall in values which has proceeded now for a good many years, which is still progressing (and nobody knows how long that fall will continue or how far it will go), and, therefore, for the purpose of investment, no one except a lunatic would in these days invest his money in purely agricultural land; and, secondly, there is another reason, and that is the fear of more radical legislation with regard to the land. These are the two great factors which at the present moment are depressing the marketable value of land. I need not say that jewels and pictures are not affected in the same way. It seems to me that the Government, with regard to the proceeds they expect to obtain from agricultural land under these new duties, will be placed in this dilemma. Either your duty will prove to be a failure altogether, and bring you in comparatively nothing, or else you will be compelled to value agricultural land in a manner which will be most unfair to the owner and the person who succeeds. I do not wish to delay the Committee at greater length on this occasion, but an expedient has occurred to me in connection with this question by which any injustice of the kind I anticipate I think possibly may be avoided. As you are determined to tax agricultural land upon its net value, I believe you might do something of this kind. I am afraid what I am going to say will not commend itself very much to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but, at all events, I submit it for his consideration. When these estates pass upon death you must value the property. You must value it in detail, putting your own valuation upon it, and having done that I think you should give to the owner of the land the option of paying his duty either in cash or in kind. That is to say, he should hand over to you a portion of his land equivalent to the amount of duty he has to pay, on your own valuation. This plan would have two great advantages. In the first place, it would ensure a perfectly fair valuation. The Government, of course, would not put it too high, because they might be compelled to take land at a value greater than its worth. On the other hand, they would not put it too low, because then they would be afraid of defrauding the Revenue; and you may be sure, therefore, that the valuation would be fair to the two parties. It would effect another advantage. I do not know how long it is since I first heard it advocated in Parliament, by gentlemen professing Liberal and Radical principles on that side of the House, that the time had come when one of the greatest advantages that could be conferred on the community of this country as a whole would be a far wider distribution of the land among the people than is the case at the present time. You yourselves were engaged during a large part of last Session in making proposals with that object. If the right hon. Gentleman will consent to consider this suggestion—if it were possible to adopt it, see what an opportunity you would have of carrying out the principles so dear to you. You might let the land which you would acquire all over the country to the new Parish Councils. You might sell them if you please, and create a vast number of small ownerships in land; and in that way you would be doing something to carry into effect the principles you so ardently profess. I have stated to the House, very crudely I am afraid, objections which I entertain to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having confined myself on this particular occasion almost exclusively to the mode in which they will affect the position and ownership of land. I do think I have made some statements to the House which deserve, and ought to receive, the most careful consideration of the Government and of the right hon. Gentleman. For sure am I of this—that there never was a time, certainly within the present generation, when the condition of agriculture as a whole was more deplorable than it is at the present moment, and that if you select this opportunity for piling further taxation upon it, you will do all that lies in the power of the Government of this country to bring it to ruin and complete destruction.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said, the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had gone to the most Radical of all Radical colonies for the suggestion which he had made to the House, with respect to the procedure in connection with the valuation of land—to the colony of New Zealand, where the owner placed his own valuation upon his land for the purpose of the Death Duties, where the State also placed its value upon the land, and the landowner could force the State to buy, and the State could force the owner to sell. That was the system, but it never came to sale in practice, because an arrangement was always arrived at which gave to both parties their due. In the course of his interesting speech, the right hon. Gentleman had painted his picture of agricultural depression in rather strong colours—for example, when he quoted the unfortunate depressed landowner with a mortgage on his estate, who might be in the wretched position of having to pay 18 per cent. on succession to the land. If there were any mortgage, he would not have 18 per cent. to pay, unless the residue was more than £1,000,000 sterling; and if a man had land of the clear value of £1,000,000 sterling he did not think that payment at that rate would be a very great hardship. That justified him in saying that the colours were laid on a little strong. Then there was a little confusion running through the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. On the last occasion when he addressed the House on the Budget—in 1888—this same question was raised by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol, and the same confusion ran through the Debate on that occasion which seemed likely to run through it on this. That confusion was conveyed in the phrase which the right hon. Gentleman used when he spoke of the burden of taxation resting heavily on the agricultural interest, while in the same breath he talked of the burden bearing heavily on land. He forgot that there was land and land, and that the interest of the owner was not exactly that which was ordinarily understood by the phrase "agricultural interest." That agricultural interest was mainly and before all the interest of the occupier of the land. As the right hon. Gentleman went on to speak of the burden of rates on the occupier he rather mixed up the two different positions of the owner and occupier of land, and the use of the phrase "agricultural interest" was confusing, because it brought two classes together under consideration whose interests were not identical. The occupier and the owner were not the same; and if it was said that the burden of rates was very heavy, it must be remembered that it was mainly a burden upon occupiers of houses rather than upon holders of agricultural land. It has been proved conclusively that the burden lay heavier upon occupiers of house property than of land. The right hon. Gentleman said this was not the moment, considering the depressed condition of agriculture, when fresh burdens should be placed on the land; and he said further that realty bore at the present moment all the burdens of the rates, and many of these rates were imposed not for local but for national purposes. [Mr. CHAPLIN: I said nearly all.] Yes, many, or nearly all. It must be remembered that upon that plea this House had over and over again allocated money from Imperial funds for the relief of these rates, and the last allocation made was a portion of the Probate Duty which was applied to that purpose because personalty could not be rated; and therefore the Probate Duty was applied to the relief of rates because it fell upon personal estate only. The right hon. Gentleman went on to advocate a full and fair discussion of this rating question and the burden upon realty. He (Sir C. Dilke) should be glad when that full and fair discussion took place. In his own constituency there were interests of various kinds. The larger interest was agriculture, and there was a proportion of collieries. The burden of rates was heavier on the coalowners than upon agricultural occupiers of land, and he thought it would be found, when this system of rates was again examined, that it was one that in the principal degree concerned town interests rather than those of the agricultural classes. The right hon. Gentleman asked for a full and fair discussion, but in the whole of his suggestive remarks, in which he raised the rating of personalty and what the objects were upon which rates were spent, he did not allude to the exemption of ground rents and values, which must be an essential portion of this discussion when it came fully before the House. Therefore, his speech was certainly one-sided when that was borne in view. Over and over again the right hon. Gentleman impressed upon the Committee the depressed condition of the land-owning classes in this country, and supported himself by copious and interesting quotations from well-known men who gave evidence before the Agricultural Commission. There was another side to the question, and although the right hon. Gentleman said any man must be a lunatic to invest in purely agricultural land at the present time, he (Sir C. Dilke) must ask what land in England, looking at the extension of railways and markets and the opportunities for turning it to advantage, could be regarded as purely agricultural land when it was in the hands of any man of ability? All land must be affected by the possibility of fruit and vegetable and flower growing, and there was very little of it that was out of reach of great towns where markets could be found. He would not give his own opinion, but the opinion of a gentleman who was perhaps the highest authority on the subject of investments — Mr. A. J. Wilson, City editor of *The Standard* and editor of *The Industrial Review*. He recommended the purchase of derelict estates of the class to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded as the best field for investment at the present prices that the world could supply. [Mr. CHAPLIN: Why does not he buy them?] Now, the right hon. Gentleman also stated that much land had gone out of cultivation in Essex and Norfolk and other counties. He did not go deeply into the causes which had driven the land out of cultivation, but he (Sir C. Dilke) was bound to say, from what he had seen himself, that in Essex tithe had much to do with it, and in Norfolk game had much to do with it. The question specially before them was one to which he would devote the greater portion of the brief remarks he had to make. Before passing away from this subject, however, he would point out to the House that over and over again a gentleman who used to sit on the Radical Benches, and who was now regarded and properly regarded by hon. Members opposite as a great authority, urged upon the House considerations the very opposite to those which the right hon. Gentleman had urged upon the House to-night. Since he had been dead he had been canonised by the Conservative Party, and with them his words carried great weight. It was the late Mr. Fawcett, who had shown in the clearest way that this question was one which upon a full consideration would turn out, not to the advantage of the agricultural interest so much as to the town interest. The Death Duty specially dealt with in this Resolution did not specially hit occupiers of land, and was not specially directed against the agricultural interest. A small farmer would be better off under this Budget than he would be under such a Budget as the right hon. Gentleman had suggested. In the case of many properties which were divided between personalty and ground values, if personalty escaped the rates the ground rents and ground values also escaped, and if the subject was to be fairly dealt with certainly ground rents and ground values ought to be brought into the Resolution. Although it had been suggested in the country by Lord Salisbury and others that personalty ought to be rated, the proposal had seldom been brought forward in the House of Commons otherwise than in the form in which it had been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman to-night. The difficulty of carrying out such a suggestion would be very great. The law of this country originally was that personalty should be rated, but the system of rating it was abandoned on account of the impossibility of carrying it into practice. The difficulty of deciding on which of several residences a rich man was to have his personal property rated, and in which district he was to pay, and the difficulty of throwing the duties that would arise upon Local Authorities, were insuperable, and he was sure that the rating of personalty was only a Will-o'-the-wisp. None of the arguments that had been used appeared to him to be strong enough to redress that which was an admitted inequality between land and other property as far as taxation was concerned. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the present occasion was, to some extent, between two fires, or rather, he was in the happy position of having taken a middle course. There was a good deal of democratic opinion outside the House in favour of carrying the principle of graduated taxation a great deal further than was proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He (Sir C. Dilke) had, he believed, longer than any other Member of the House advocated graduated Death Duties, and he was happy to see how rapidly that principle had moved within the last few years. Only a few years ago he ventured to advocate as possible in extreme cases a Death Duty of 25 per cent. That was looked upon as a very extreme proposition, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer was now trying a duty of 18·1 per cent., which was undoubtedly the highest Death Duty in the world. There were some who thought that it would have been wise for the right hon. Gentleman to go still further. He was bound to say that, looking to the possibility of fraud and to the certainty of a certain amount of what might be called more legitimate evasion of duty, there were reasons why the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not suddenly go too far in this particular direction. The New Zealand Death Duty was one in extreme cases of 13 per cent. If, however, there was any transference of any property from this country in consequence of the Budget proposals it would be not to the Colonies but to the neighbouring countries of Europe. In France the extreme Death Duty was $10\frac{1}{4}$ to $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In Victoria it was 10 per cent., and in New South Wales and South Australia it was much smaller, while there were very few other countries which had graduated Death Duties at all. There were a great many people outside the House who desired to see a graduated Income Tax adopted either in substitution for or in addition to the Death Duties. The Budget scheme afforded great advantages over any such proposal. A graduated Income Tax would produce enormous difficulties of collection. He failed to see how it would be possible at all to collect a graduated tax upon securities. It would be impossible to tell whether all the Stock that was credited to a person with a certain name belonged to the same person, as the similarities of names were so misleading, and he believed the similarities of scarce names were more misleading than those of common names. He himself had been on the Register of Voters in the place of his own great-grandfather. If a graduated Income Tax were not collected upon securities it would be necessary to make a man declare his income, and this would result in fraudulent returns unless the returns were published. When an attempt had been made to levy a heavy Income Tax in foreign countries it had been accompanied by the publication of the returns, and in the United States the returns were published for years as public documents. Of course, under such a system the State would find itself well off. Some men, no doubt, would return less than their incomes, but there were some who for business purposes would return more than their incomes. There was one man in New York who would rather have perished than have allowed any man to return a higher income than he did. Unless the returns were published, he was convinced that it would be impossible to graduate the Income Tax. He thought, therefore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been right in falling back upon graduated Death Duties alone. He did not believe that the direct transference of property abroad was very probable. It was notorious that rich men valued complete freedom of bequest, and if they were to transfer their property abroad they would lose such freedom. If it was true that there was no privilege which an Englishman valued more than that of being able to cut off his son with a shilling, that fact would undoubtedly prevent the transference of property to foreign countries. As to fraud, there was very much less danger of fraud in the case of the Death Duties than in that of the Income Tax. In the case of the Death Duties it was a man's successors who paid the duty on his estate, and they were under very heavy penalties to make a correct return. There were professional men who were liable to be completely ruined by any fraud on their part, and though testators might possess a fraudulent intent, their executors were very seldom allowed to carry such intent into execution. But fraud might be feared under very heavy Death Duties, and that was a reason why Parliament should shrink from going too fast all at once. Evasions of the Death Duties by means of changes made in the disposition of a property during the owner's lifetime were in his opinion a good thing, and to the advantage of the State. They tended to bring property into the hands of men who were able to use it, and prevented what was virtually a dead hand being extended over property for an indefinite time. It had been suggested, however, that the State ought to be satisfied with any valuation that was put before it. One reason why he (Sir C. Dilke) welcomed the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) with regard to the valuation of land was that he thought it desirable to take the first opportunity of objecting to any such lax principle being adopted. It would be damaging to the conscience of the community and a bad thing for the Exchequer should any lax system of valuation be adopted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was very largely robbed in reference to books, pictures, and things of that kind. Valuers were generally represented by their clerks, who seemed to think that all books should be valued at about 3d. a volume, and all pictures at the value of their frames. He could not but think it would be a wise thing if steps were taken to improve such a state of things. It had been suggested that these Death Duties would force the sale of estates. He could not but think that even in some of those cases where estates might have to be sold an advantage would result to the community. For the reasons he had stated he gave a hearty support to the Resolution.

MR. GRANT-LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, it clearly illustrated the difficulty of the subject when they saw the right hon. Baronet, whose ability they all appreciated, falling into confusion at the commencement of his speech in regard to "testator" and "recipient." The right hon. Baronet had said it was impossible that the case laid before the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford could occur—it would be impossible for anyone taking a burdened estate to pay 18 per cent. The right hon. Baronet had confused the living man with the dead man. It was the dead man's possessions that were aggregated——

SIR C. W. DILKE: They do not pay 18 per cent. They only pay 8 or 9.

*MR. GRANT-LAWSON said, that a rich man with £1,000,000 died. Amongst his possessions was an encumbered estate. He left his other property to one man and the encumbered estate to another. If the latter was a stranger in blood he would have to pay 18 per cent. He (Mr. Grant-Lawson) was interested in this question of Succession Duties, having been a payer and having had a quarrel with Somerset House in the matter. He could not help regarding this Budget as the sequel to the Registration Bill, the Government proposing in that measure to reduce the representation of holders of real estate, and now proposing in the Budget to saddle that class with extra burdens. Well, he hoped to be able to give one or two figures to show that land was already, whether as regarded local taxation or Imperial and local taxation together, taxed up to the hilt, and that in fairness it should now be dealt with leniently and lightly. He would not speak of agricultural depression, because he desired his remarks to refer to the whole of realty, both land and houses, as affected by this Resolution. When the proper time came he should be happy to say something about the tax falling upon agricultural land—and he must call in aid the assistance of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, because only as lately as 1888, speaking in this House, he said—

> "He thought that agricultural land at this time was entitled to great consideration, and if Succession Duty fell only on agricultural land he would not press for an equalisation of the duties at the present moment."

He hoped when it was proposed that that duty should not fall on agricultural land they would have the benefit of the right hon. Gentleman's assistance. The reason he (Mr. Grant-Lawson) would give why land should be treated leniently was that it was the raw material of all production. That was an argument which found great weight with hon. Gentlemen opposite, if they would study the writings of their own friends in the Land Restoration League and the Land Nationalisation Society. The gentlemen who wrote for these Leagues and Societies drew as a deduction from the facts that the land ought not to be in present hands. But the House might draw the deduction that if the land was the raw material of all production it ought not to be heavily taxed, for no raw material in these days was or ought to be taxed if they could help it. Why was that argument ignored in the case of land? It was because it was supposed that land and houses were held in the hands of a few—namely, the rich. That was the reason it did not get justice, and that, obviously, would really be the case in the future, for if the proposals of the Government were carried the collection of estates into fewer hands would rapidly take place. He would define these proposals as an attempt to compel, if not Naboth, Naboth's son or his grandson to sell his vineyard to some Cotton King or other, for only very rich men would be able to keep land at all. This was the very difficulty the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian foresaw in 1853 if any proposal was made to tax land for Death Duties on its capital value. The right hon. Gentleman below him had read a passage from that speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, but there was another passage even stronger. He said—

> "It would be obviously highly inconsistent while we leave such property (speaking of real property) subject to its heavy annual burdens, to aggravate these by laying a heavy charge on the capital. For the Government would then force and accelerate by the pressure of fiscal enactments charges on the tenure of this property; and that acceleration would be, in my opinion, not only unjust, but most cruel and mischievous in a social point of view."

Whatever might happen in the future, real property—land and houses—was not now altogether in the hands of rich men. He was glad to say that in the part of the country with which he was connected a vast number of working men owned their own houses, and on these men would fall to a large extent the proposed duty. What had been the policy of the House during the past 10 or 12 years? To encourage both in England and Ireland the creation of small proprietors and ownerships. The small tenant farmer of whom the right hon. Gentleman just now spoke might be a yeoman farmer owning the farm he tilled. On such an one these burdens would fall with great severity. What was the present position of the land as regarded taxation? Its position presented four anomalies or admitted inequalities as the right hon. Gentleman called them — namely, in regard to Income Tax, Death Duties, the exclusive monopoly of the burden of the Land Tax, which was originally levied on all property, and its special position as to local burdens. On the Death Duties anomaly the right hon. Gentleman opposite had spoken at great length, on the Income Tax anomaly he had spoken a little, and the other two anomalies he had said nothing about. Having regard to the Registration Bill of the Government and to their Budget it might be said of them that they

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to."

He must now confine himself to the anomalies of the Death Duties, which were calculated on life interest and not on capital value. That advantage, he could tell the Committee from experience, was more apparent than real. If they went to Somerset House as successor to real property what happened was this: The gross income was taken and arbitrary deductions were made which were considered sufficient to get at the net income; then the net income was calculated as an annuity, and on that they had to pay. The whole thing rested on the net income being fairly arrived at, and on that nothing was allowed off for management of estate or agency—though 5 per cent. for agency was usual on estate accounts. A man was richer in the opinion of Somerset House than he was at his bankers. The anomaly of which he was speaking was created, explained, and justified by the Member for Midlothian himself. He did not know that anybody had ever undertaken to explain the injustice of the Income Tax, but as regarded the anomaly of the Death Duties the right hon. Gentleman in 1853 mentioned four or five reasons why this apparent anomaly should be allowed to continue. The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the Income Tax, the Land Tax, the expense of transfer, and especially the great weight of local taxation. He had gone closely into the right hon. Gentleman's figures to see whether his arguments had lost any force during the time which had elapsed. He wished to say a few words with reference to the question of local burdens on land, because these burdens were now actually heavier on the total value of realty than they were in 1853. It was impossible to obtain the real amount of the rates in 1853, but it was possible to get them for 1851. From the Report of 1870, presented to this House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. George's Division, he found that the receipts from the rates in 1851 were £8,916,000, they were in 1890-91 £27,818,642. In 1851 they had no absolute Return of the rateable value of realty, but they had his right hon. Friend's Return as to the gross value of realty in that year, and, further, a table showing how much at that period they had to deduct from the gross annual value to arrive at the rateable value. Working that out, it would be found that the rateable value in 1851 was £71,107,000, whereas in 1890-91 the rateable value of realty had grown to £152,116,000. By the process of simple arithmetic anybody could arrive at this fact, that whereas in 1851 the rates falling on realty amounted to 2s. 6d and 1-10thd. in the £1, in 1890-91 the rates were 3s. 7¾d. in the £1; so that the pressure of local taxation was heavier now than it was in 1853, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian made it justify this anomaly. He would not make an estimate of the amount that would fall upon real property when the English Local Governmentt Bill came into operation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer kept entirely out of view all this question of local taxation and the burdens on realty. In doing so, he had succeeded in avoiding what would have been a rather nasty rock to stumble upon, because in his Budget speech he quoted against realty the Report of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's of 1870, as showing that realty in England paid less to Imperial taxation than it did in several other countries which he named. If the right hon. Gentleman had completed the paragraph which he was reading he would have found the diametrically opposite to be the case as regarded Imperial and local taxation coupled together. These words came immediately before the words which the Chancellor of the Exchequer read—

> "It is, therefore, apparent that, with the exception of Belgium, real properties pay a larger proportion in the United Kingdom to what it pays elsewhere, though the difference between France and the United Kingdom is little more than 1 per cent. Throwing Imperial and local taxation together, the general result of the taxes upon real property appears to be as follows:"—

and there followed a table showing that realty in the United Kingdom, taking local and Imperial taxation together, after the abolition of the Fire Insurance Duty and the reduction of the Income Tax to 4d., paid more than any other country, Belgium excepted. What was the relief in the matter of Income Tax? The right hon. Gentleman based this Resolution upon the fact that he had given some reduction in the matter of Income Tax, and had accused them of being ungrateful. He assured the right hon. Gentleman that they were grateful for small mercies; they had not been plundered so much as some of the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman had desired they should be. But he appealed to the common sense of the Committee as to whether any landlord in the world received nine-tenths of the gross rent roll of his estate to spend. He took it that what was meant by net income was the income which, at the end of the year, would be available for dividend if a person made himself into a Joint Stock Company. Who could say that one-tenth was a fair deduction to get? As regarded the outgoings, there were the repairs, the management and collection of the rent, arrears, and law charges, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian said—

> "Without these it is impossible to conduct business connected with landed property and houses."

Taking off all these deductions, and remembering that they came, in the case of real property, charged for mortgages, annuities, dowers, and portions, only out of the margin, who could say that one-tenth was a reasonable deduction? He had the specific figures before him. For the purpose of getting the rateable value of property it was the rule to deduct everything that was required to keep the property in a state of repair sufficient to earn the rent. He would not take anyone County or Rating Authority, because the application of the rule varied with different counties, but he would take the collective wisdom of all the Rating Authorities of England. The Return of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, showed calculations at five different periods as to the gross income returned for Income Tax, and it appeared that to arrive at rateable value the deduction ought to be not 10 per cent. or 16⅔ per cent., which it was now proposed by the Chancellor to deduct, but between 25 and 30 per cent. The Secretary of State for India said in his Report in 1891 that the gross income from land, houses, railways, and rateable property generally was £219,554,086. The rateable value was £152,116,008. The deduction was almost precisely 30 per cent., or rather over. The Chancellor of the Exchequer started with the proposition that it was best to place both taxes, the Death Duties and the Income Tax, on a fair and equitable basis, but the small deduction he had allowed, an instalment of justice long overdue, would not induce owners of land and the agricultural interest generally to give him a receipt in full for all the claims they had, not upon his generosity but upon his sense of justice. They entered that *caveat* at once. It would be found that land, instead of paying too little to Imperial taxation as compared with personalty, was paying too much, and they could still continue to put that claim before their constituents.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): Before I say a few words upon the general question, I should like to make one remark in reply to the hon. Member who has just sat down. He says that no one who has any knowledge of rating would make the deduction which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has suggested, and that it is inconsistent with both the practice and opinion of all Rating Authorities. I think that the Rating Authority of the great County of Lancashire and the Rating Authority of the West Riding of Yorkshire are two very typical and reliable cases to guide this House. Those authorities may be taken as specimens of men who are singularly competent to decide these questions, and their counties are specimens of counties where every variety of industry flourishes, perhaps to be found nowhere else in the Kingdom. Those Rating Authorities declared in their recommendation to their County Councils, and the County Councils have adopted the recommendation, that 1-12th is the proper allowance to make in respect of land, and one-sixth in respect of house property, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, while accepting the higher rate so far as houses were concerned, has increased the 1-12th to 1-10th in respect of land. But I have risen not to reply to the hon. Member on that question, but rather to reply upon the broader questions which he has raised, and which were also raised by the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division. That right hon. Gentleman said that the land of this country was taxed and rated out of all proportion to its real value—[*Opposition cheers*]—and those cheers show that hon. Members share in that view. The hon. Member who has just sat down has instanced many anomalies which affect taxation of land in this country, and has dwelt upon the excessive burden of local taxation, having taken the figures from the Return of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, and also from a Return I myself prepared some few months ago. Having had the duty devolved upon me of making that inquiry, I hope the Committee will allow me to say a word or two in reference to this burden of taxation upon land in this country, and especially upon agricultural land. I admit at once that it is a grave question, and a difficult question. I admit that in 1853 my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian pointed to the burdens on land in the shape of local taxation. That was the justification of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1888. But although the right hon. Gentleman then stated that the account was closed, and that the State had then rendered full satisfaction to the landed interest, with respect to local taxation, yet now we find the demand is still made, and the complaints are now perhaps greater than they ever were. I think, under these circumstances, it will not be an unpardonable expenditure of time if I point out what the real facts are. These assertions cannot be either proved or disproved by making dogmatic statements. Some Members may be of opinion that land is unjustly taxed so far as local taxation is concerned; others may be of opinion that land is not taxed sufficiently as compared with other interests in the country. All I am going to do to-night—and I shall deal with the matter in no controversial spirit—is to endeavour to put before the Committee the result of my own inquiry, and also the result of the combined inquiries of the right hon. Gentleman and myself on this question, and I will leave the Committee to draw its own conclusions. Now, the first thing we have to deal with is to ascertain what is the total amount of public rates levied at the present time—what is the amount of our local taxation. The hon. Member who has just sat down said with great accuracy that that taxation has been enormously increased in recent years. I exclude from consideration all rates levied for other than public purposes. I do not include gas or water rates, or any rates levied, so to speak, for a reproductive purpose. I am dealing now with what the right hon. Gentleman opposite called direct taxation, and I am taking the figures for the last year for which we have a correct Return, the year 1891. In a few weeks' time the Returns for the next year will be ready, but I know enough of the figures to say that practically the difference will be very slight, and the Committee will be safe in judging this question on the figures of the last year's Return published of local taxation. The amount of local taxation is, in round figures, £28,000,000, it being £27,818,000. I need hardly say that that is a figure which the Committee should not pass by lightly. My right hon. Friend in his Budget has made very great demands—the Government think necessary demands—upon the public in respect to Imperial Expenditure. That Imperial Expenditure has grown, and is growing, to a very enormous sum. When we consider the burdens upon the people of this country we must add to this very heavy Imperial Expenditure the enormous sum of local taxation which is, I am afraid, rapidly approaching £30,000,000 sterling. The next point is how is this £28,000,000 raised, or rather from what localities is it raised, and how is it classified? I will deal with it rather in round figures, and will not trouble the Committee with fractions. Now the Metropolitan and urban districts of this country raise about £17,500,000. London raises about £8,000,000, and the rest of the municipal and other boroughs and urban districts raise £9,500,000. The partly urban and partly rural districts raise £8,200,000, and the purely rural districts raise in round figures a little over £2,000,000 — to be exactly right, £2,108,673. In that mode we raise the £28,000,000. I would like, in the first instance, to contrast this with the rates which were raised when the right hon. Gentleman opposite made his investigation 25 years ago. He then ascertained that the aggregate taxation of this country for local rates was in round figures £16,500,000. The Committee will note the large increase from £16,500,000 to practically £30,000,000 in these few years since 1868. I find in the Metropolitan and urban districts the taxation was then £6,750,000. It is now £17,500,000, so that the Committee will note that the enormous increase has not been in the agricultural districts, but that it has been in the urban and Metropolitan districts. In partly urban and partly rural districts—and this is a very singular feature which I shall explain shortly—the amount is now practically the same as it was then, but there is a slight decrease of something like £160,000. But in round figures you may say that the increase has been £10,750,000 in the urban and Metropolitan districts. There has been no increase in the partly rural and partly urban, but in the purely rural there has been an increase of nearly £700,000.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Would the right hon. Gentleman give us figures respecting the rateable values?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that I have no wish to put these figures before the Committee in any one-sided way, and I will call attention to the varieties in rateable value presently. That is a very important point, of course, and I may say now that these details that I have given are to a certain extent misleading, because the decrease in the rates raised in the partly urban and partly rural districts is due largely to subventions. Then the area in which the rural rates are raised is constantly diminishing, in consequence of the formation of new urban districts, and the rateable value may have so risen in some urban and fallen in some rural districts that the rates in the £1 may have fallen in the urban and risen in the rural districts. Therefore I do not ask the Committee to take these figures as conclusive. I would rather take as the test of the severity of local burdens, not the amount raised, but the rates in the £1 of the rates levied. What is the average rate in the £1, taking into consideration all the rates levied in England and Wales, and to what extent has that rate been increased? Until we get to the year 1841 I do not think the figures are to be entirely depended on; but in 1803 the average rate was 4s. 5¼d. in the £1; in 1813-15, 3s. 1¾d.; in 1817, 3s. 10¾d.; in 1827, 3s. 8d.; in 1841, 2s. 7d.; in 1868, 3s. 4d.; and in 1891, 3s. 8d. Between 1868 and 1891, therefore, there has been an increase of 4d. only. The fluctuation of the rates has been remarkable, and it is due to the subventions that the amount has not exceeded 3s. 8d. Taking this figure of 3s. 8d. as the total rate in the £1 for England and Wales, the next question for consideration is how it is composed. What portion of it is raised by what are called old rates and what portion by rates imposed in recent times? The right hon. Member for Sleaford rather blamed the Government for not taking the Land Tax into consideration as a tax upon land. I cannot agree with the view of the right hon. Gentleman, for the Land Tax is essentially an hereditary burden, subject to which land has been bought and sold at all events for 100 or 150 years. The Land Tax, of course, has nothing to do with my present argument; I am only saying that in passing, because the Land Tax is not a local but Imperial charge. There are two charges which I shall venture to submit to the Committee are emphatically hereditary burdens outside the purview of what might be described as current taxation. The old rates levied during a long series of years from 1841 were divided by my predecessor and by myself into four—the poor rate, the highway rate, the county rate, and the church rate. These are the old rates. The new rates are the sanitary and the whole structure of municipal, urban, and education rates. [An hon. MEMBER: The police rate.] The police rate is included in the county rate, and both have been collected together. But the oldest rate of all, and the principal local rate levied for 300 years, is the poor rate; and by the poor rate rising and falling is to a great extent to be tested the severity or the contrary of local burdens. The poor rate, I maintain, is an hereditary burden on land. ["No, no!"] The poor rate has been imposed on land in this country at all events since 1603; land has been charged with the burden of maintaining the poor of the parish in which that land was situated ["No, no!"]; and every acre of land since 1603 has been bought and sold subject to that burden. It is the unfortunate mischief of our system of local taxation that in the expression "poor rate" we include a great deal that does not relate to the relief of the poor. We have the rates raised for the expenditure of the Guardians and the Poor Law Authorities for purposes connected with the relief of the poor; but then the county rate, often the borough rate, the police rate, contributions to the Overseers, Highway Boards, School Boards, Rural Sanitary Authorities, are all raised in the poor rate. Therefore, to get at the real truth of that impost, we must dismiss everything except Poor Law expenditure. I do not say that the gross poor rate is an hereditary burden on land. I do not say that the poor rate of last year, which was nearer £16,000,000 than £15,000,000, is a hereditary burden on land, because it includes a vast variety of items which are not hereditary burdens; but out of the amount of the poor rate raised for these purposes, what is expended in relief of the poor? That is the true hereditary burden. Last year there was expended in relief of the poor about £7,250,000, and that was raised out of the sum I mentioned of nearly £16,000,000. What I want to put to the Committee is what has been the pure poor rate—if I may coin an expression—the rate raised for the relief of the poor, and has that been an increasing or a diminishing burden? Is the average now higher than it was, and is there a greater burden imposed upon land for the relief of the poor than there has been in any previous period? We have clear figures about that. In 1803 the rate expended in relief of the poor was 3s. 4½d. in the £1; in 1813, 2s. 4¼d.; in 1827, 2s. 5¾d.; in 1841, 1s. 6¼d.; in 1856, 1s. 8d.; in 1866, 1s. 4½d.; and in 1868 the right hon. Gentleman opposite put the rate at 1s. 6d. Taking 1868 as the starting-point of my calculation with reference to the poor rate, I have to see what was the condition of the poor rate in 1891 as compared with 1868. The testing of this figure will, I think, throw some light on the relief which has been given out of Imperial taxation for local purposes. In 1891 the average poor rate of England and Wales was 1s. 1½d.; in London it was 1s. 1¼d.; and in the provinces it was under 8¼d. If you, therefore, exclude London—and I think for the purposes of an argument of this sort we should, especially in dealing with rural taxation — we find that in 1891 this rate is, in the Provinces, less than half of what it was in 1868. There are, of course, certain items to be added in the shape of expenses which fall on the Poor Law Authorities which are neither wholly connected nor wholly unconnected with the relief of the poor; but taking all these into account, I submit that there has been a fall of more than 4d. in the £1 in London and 7½d. in the Provinces. There is a decrease, therefore, of what I venture to submit to the House is an hereditary burden on land, and that decrease has arisen, not from a decrease in the expenditure of poor relief, which has increased and is still increasing—the relief has arisen partly from an increase in the rateable value and partly from the very large subventions which have been made to the Poor Law Guardians in the relief of the rate for the specific purposes of relieving the poor. The other hereditary burden which land is bound to bear is the highway rate. Land has always been subject in this country—ever, indeed, since this country might be said to have had civilisation — to the burden of repairing the highways. That rate has been virtually the same for, I might say, the greater part of this century. In 1817 it was £1,400,000; in 1862 it stood at the same figure. In

1883 the average rate levied in the £1 for the highway rate was 7·1d.; it varied slightly until 1889, when it again stood at 7·1d.; in the two succeeding years it was 6·4d. and 6d., and practically the rate is standing at that figure now. If anything, therefore, there has been a fall in the highway rate during the last few years. I need say nothing about the church rate. That has gone, but while it lasted it was a burden. There is a greater difficulty in dealing with the county rate. The counties had different modes of assessment, and the areas of the counties had varied, especially since the introduction of the Local Government Act of 1888, which, so far as the Metropolis is concerned, has materially altered the position of the counties. The figures I am now quoting are not my own figures, but those of the Statistical and other Departments of the Local Government Board, prepared under the superintendence of one of the ablest men in the Civil Service, and therefore the figures can be relied on. The result shown is that there has been no great variation in the county rate. In 1870 it was 4¾d.; in 1880, 4¼d.; and I place it myself now practically at 5d., but I do not think that it has increased beyond that amount. The result of all this upon these old rates, which have always been for a long series of years a burden on land, and two of which are an hereditary burden on land, is that while those old rates in 1868 were 2s. 7d. in the £1, in 1891 they were 1s. 10½d.; and, therefore, there has been a fall in the old rates of 8½d. It is clear, therefore, that so far as these are concerned there has been this reduction. There is another side, of course, to the account. Hon. Members will say, "It is all very well to talk about old rates, but you have already admitted to us apparently that there is a rise of 4d. from 1868 to the present, whilst now you are talking of a diminution of 8½d. How do you account for the discrepancy?" By the great increase in taxation which has taken place during the last 20 years. Local taxation appears to have commenced its rise at the beginning of the '70's. It increased largely in the '80's, and it has not decreased in the '90's. In 1868 the municipal and urban sanitary rates outside London amounted to £3,000,000. In 1880 they were £5,700,000, and in 1891 £8,500,000. Prior to 1880 the rates in the £1 of those rates cannot be ascertained, as the rateable values of the urban districts are not recorded. In 1880 the rate in the £1 of the municipal and urban sanitary rate averaged, in boroughs 2s. 5½d., and in other urban districts 1s. 9¾d. In 1891 it had risen in boroughs to 3s. 0½d., and in other urban districts to 2s. 4d. In addition to these rates, there were also the new School Board rates, which had come into existence since 1868, and which, when spread over the whole of the valuations of boroughs and other urban districts, averaged in boroughs a little over 5d., and in other urban districts 3¼d. in the £1. I come to the conclusion that the new rates levied in boroughs have now reached 3s. 5½d. in the £1. There is an average borough rate of 7·2d., an average School Board rate of 5d., and an average borough urban sanitary rate of 2s. 5¼d. The House will see that these are entirely new rates, which were not in existence to a great extent many years ago, and these formed a considerable increase to the local taxation. With reference to the rates in the rural districts, the first difficulty in finding out what has been the position of purely rural districts is with reference to the School Board rate. In some districts there is no such rate, while in others it is very heavy. The rate as a whole must be taken and spread over the whole of the rural districts. The new burdens which have been imposed on land within the last 20 years are three in number—the rural sanitary rate, the School Board rate, and the burial rate. The gross total of the rural sanitary rate is £412,000; the gross total of the School Board rate raised in purely rural districts is £350,000. There is also a proportion of the School Board rate raised in parishes consisting mainly of urban districts, but which include a considerable portion of rural population; and for that I allow £105,000. The gross total of new local taxation on the rural districts between 1868 and 1891 was, therefore, £867,000. If that were spread equally over the poor rate valuation of these rural districts, it would amount to a rate of 4d. in the £1. Therefore, the rural districts are paying in local taxation under the old rates 8½d. in the £1 less, and under the new rates 4d. in the £1 more, showing a net deduction of 4½d. in the £1. In the valuable tables prepared in 1868 the amount of the poor, county, church, and highway rates levied in the rural districts was put at 2s. 7d. in the £1. The same rates, with the addition of the sanitary and education rates, in 1890-91 were put at 2s. 2½d., which would show a fall of 4½d. Hon. Members have asked me about rateable values, and what are the proportions of property on which these rates fall. I do not quite understand the figures which the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has given us. He said that in 1851 the rateable value was £71,000,000. Now, Sir, I have it here in the Report of the right hon. Gentleman opposite that the rateable value in 1847 was £67,000,000; in 1856 it was put at £71,840,000; and in 1868 it had reached £100,500,000. The increase in the rateable value between 1868 and to-day is the difference between £100,000,000 and £154,000,000. The rateable value of the rural sanitary districts in 1882 was £55,000,000, and in 1892 was £53,000,000, which shows a very small decrease. Of course, there is an explanation of that. It arose partly on account of the increase of value of one description of property and decrease of value in another description, because I find that the Income Tax valuation of the value of the land has fallen from £50,000,000 in 1873 to £42,000,000 in the present year, which is a decrease of something like £8,000,000; and therefore much of the decrease in the rural sanitary rateable value must arise from the increase of house and other properties in those districts and also, perhaps, from a better mode of assessment so far as that is concerned. At all events, so far as the rural districts are concerned, we have only a decrease of rateable value of something like £2,500,000. The question we have to ask ourselves is, what is the burden on land of local taxation at the present day? That is the point on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer is impeached with reference to the Budget. The argument of the right hon. Member for Sleaford was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no right to increase the burden of Imperial taxation on land, because its burdens in respect of local taxation had been so enormously increased. As far as rating was concerned, I have shown the House that the burden has been decreased instead of increased in recent years. We have the difficulty again in reference to these figures which is caused by the difference between our various systems of valuation. I ventured to say when the Local Government Bill was before the House that I knew for no more pressing reform than that there should be an assessment for all purposes. We ought to have one valuation for local and Imperial purposes. The County Councils are now endeavouring to put their rates upon what I may call a rational system, because there is no rational principle in the variety of systems adopted by the various assessment committees. They vary to an enormous extent, and therefore, when aggregated, they present the extraordinary discrepancy which the hon. Member for Thirsk pointed out. As showing how the value of different classes of property has shifted I call the attention of the House to the following figures:—According to the investigations of the right hon. Gentleman, the total annual value of rateable property was thus distributed: In 1814, of a total of £53,500,000, lands represented £37,000,000, houses nearly £15,000,000, and "other property" about £1,500,000. In 1843 the total amount had risen to £85,803,000, and was thus distributed: Lands, £42,128,000; houses, £35,556,000; railways, £2,418,000; and other property, £5,701,000. In 1868 the total value was £143,873,000, distributed as follows: Lands, £47,767,000; houses, £68,013,000; railways, £15,980,000; and other property, £12,113,000. The House will, perhaps, understand these figures better if I give them in the form of percentages. In 1814 lands represented 69·28 per cent.; houses, 27·84 per cent., and other property 2·88 per cent. In 1843 lands had decreased to 49·10 per cent.; houses were 41·44 per cent.; railways were 2·82 per cent., and other property 6·64 per cent. In 1868 the percentage of lands was only 33·20; of houses 47·27; of railways 11·11; and of other property 8·42. Commenting on these figures, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "It appears that a complete revolution has taken place in the relative position of lands and other classes of property as contributors to

> local taxation. While in 1814 lands, speaking broadly. represented 70 per cent. of the total value of real property, they now represent only 33 per cent., or less than half of the previous percentage; houses which in 1814 contributed only 27·84 per cent., or little more than one quarter of the value of real property, now represent 47·27, or nearly one-half; while railways and other property which in 1814 contributed only 2·88 to the whole now together contribute 19·53."

The same process has continued since 1868. On reference to the amounts and percentages of the assessments to the Income Tax, it will be seen that the percentage of lands has steadily fallen, while those of houses, railways, and other properties have steadily increased. The figures for the Income Tax valuation for 1890-1 show that of a total annual value of £219,000,000 lands were represented by 19·24 per cent., houses by 56·35 per cent., railways by 14·02, and other properties by 10·39. The rates raised by Local Authorities amounted in 1817 to £10,100,000, and in 1868 to £16,500,000. It would appear, therefore, that the rates borne by lands amounted, speaking broadly, in 1817 to £6,733,000, and in 1868 £5,500,000; while those borne by houses and other properties amounted in 1817 to £3,366,000, and in 1868 to £11,000,000. In 1891 the rates borne by lands did not exceed £4,260,000, while those borne by houses and other properties amounted at least to £23,500,000. When I mention land I should tell the House that it not only includes agricultural land, but land for ornamental purposes, parks, gardens attached to houses, farm houses, farm buildings, tithe-rent charge, tithe not arising from land, Easter offerings, and other money payments in respect of Church matters, other royalties, easements, right of way, and so on. If the amount of £4,260,000 had been borne by agricultural land it would have amounted last year to an average of 3s. 0·7d. on the 27,800,000 acres which are under all kinds of crops. That is a singular confirmation of the statement made to me four or five years ago by the late Mr. James Howard, who was a sound authority on all agricultural matters. Mr. Howard was talking of the great distress in agriculture which was then very much depressed—though it is more depressed now, and he said that of all delusions which agriculturists entertained none was greater than the idea that they could be relieved by any shifting or changing of local taxation. He added that if the land were to be relieved from all rates whatever, the relief would only amount to something between 2s. and 3s. an acre. I have shown that the actual figure is about 3s. 0¾d. per acre. Can that mean the prosperity or depression of the agricultural interest? I do not wish to minimise the depression in agriculture. It is the greatest industry in the country; it has the largest amount of capital invested in it; and it is more depressed than any other. At the same time, if we are to look at the matter from a statesmanlike point of view, we must be sure of the facts and figures, and I submit to the House with a considerable amount of confidence that the real burden on agricultural land at this moment is not much over 3s. 0½d. per acre, and that from whatever source agriculturists are to look for relief—and I hope they will be able to find some reliable source—I do not believe they will find it in tampering with or shifting about the burdens of local taxation. May I say one word before I sit down about subventions? Why have these rates diminished in spite of a large increase of expenditure on the poor and on sanitary purposes? The answer to that is, first, that it is due to the great increase in the rateable value of property; and, secondly, to the large amount which is contributed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer out of the Imperial funds to the relief of the local rates. I am not going to enter into a discussion upon arguable points such as those which relate to contribution from the Treasury to the prisons, for the police, and a variety of similar purposes. But my general contention is that the relief which has been given out of Imperial Revenue to local taxation during the last few years has amounted to something like £6,500,000 per annum, with the result that in 1891 in London, where the average rate in the £1 of the rates raised, calculated on the poor rate valuation, was 5s., the relief given was 8·6d. in the £1; in the county boroughs, where the average rate in the £1 of the rates was 4s. 6½d., the relief given was 10·2d. in the £1; and in the administrative counties, where the average rate in the £1 of the rates was 2s. 10½d., the relief given was 9·6d. In the following year the relief given was, in London, 8·8d.; in the county boroughs, 10·5d.; and in the administrative counties 10·1d. The inquiries instituted by the Local Government Board show that in 1868, of the total £16,504,000 rates raised, £3,703,000 were raised in London; £3,027,000 in other purely urban districts; £8,358,000 in extra-Metropolitan districts, partly urban and partly rural; and £1,416,000 in purely rural districts. In 1890-91, of the total £27,818,000 rates raised, £7,930,000 were raised in London; £9,583,000 in other purely urban districts; £8,196,000 in extra-Metropolitan districts, partly urban and partly rural; and £2,109,000 in purely rural districts. In 1868 the rateable value of England and Wales, according to the poor rate valuation, was £100,612,000, of which £16,946,000 was the rateable value of London. The rateable values of extra-Metropolitan urban districts for that year cannot be separated from those of rural districts. In 1890-91 the total rateable value was £152,116,000, distributed as follows:—London, £31,597,000; boroughs, £43,545,000; other urban districts, £23,696,000; rural districts, £53,278,000. In 1868 the average rate in the £1 of all rates for the whole of England and Wales, calculated on the poor rate valuation, was 3s. 4d.; in 1890-91 it was 3s. 8d.; in 1868 the average rate in the £1 of all rates for London, calculated on the same principle, was 4s. 4½d.; in 1890-91 it was 5s. In 1868 the average rate in the £1 of all rates for extra-Metropolitan urban districts cannot be ascertained. In 1890-91 it was—In county boroughs, 4s. 6½d.; in non-county boroughs, 4s. 4½d.; other urban districts, 3s. 11d. In each of these classes of districts the average rate in the £1 had risen very considerably since 1868. In rural districts the average rate in the £1 of all rates in 1868 (excluding certain rates raised by Commissioners of Sewers and Drainage and Embankment Boards, which are levied in a limited number of counties), was 2s. 7½d.; in 1890-91 it was 2s. 3d. The fall in the rate in the £1 of rural rates was mainly due to the fall in the poor rate levied to meet the expenses of Poor Law Authorities. It was also attributable to the disappearance of the church rate and to a fall in many counties in the highway rate and the county rate. As against these falls, the new rural sanitary rates and rural School Board rates had come into existence since 1868. But the decreases in the rate in the £1 of the old rural rates, *i.e.*, the poor rate, the highway rate, and the county rate, were considerably greater than the average rates in the £1 of the new rural rates. The urban ratepayers participated in the benefits arising from the fall in the rate in the £1 of the poor rate and the disappearance of the church rate, and in some counties from the fall in the county rate; but these benefits were more than counterbalanced by the rise in the rates in the £1 of the modern urban rates, especially the urban sanitary rates and the urban School Board rate. The modern sanitary rates press with severity on the ratepayers in towns where the aggregation of large populations in comparatively small areas necessitates the provision of costly schemes of sewerage, scavenging, water-supply, and other works of primary sanitary importance which cannot be neglected without serious danger to the public health. As the final result, I submit to the Committee that at no time during the present century for which statistics are available has the average rate in the £1 of the rural rates been so low and, I must add, that of the London rates so high as during the years 1890 and 1891.

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I will venture, in the first place, to supplement the last sentence of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down by adding that never has agricultural depression been so great or the wealth and rateable valuation of London so high as at the present moment. The right hon. Gentleman has given the Committee a most interesting and able exposition of a very voluminous Return which has been made by his Department. Of course, I cannot profess to be able at a minute's notice to follow the figures which the right hon. Gentleman has quoted to the Committee; but I venture to say that no amount of averages taken from all parts of the country will convince anyone that the rates at the present time are not higher than they were in the early part of the present century, or will make the agricultural ratepayer believe that real property is not burdened as regards local rates most unfairly as compared with personal property, or that there ever was a time when the agricultural ratepayers was less able to bear the burden of those rates than at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman has followed many previous speakers by calmly excluding from his calculation some of the taxes and rates as forming hereditary burdens upon the land. For example, the right hon. Gentleman has asserted that the Land Tax and the poor rate are hereditary rates, and therefore cannot be regarded as burdens upon the land. As regards the Land Tax and poor rate, however, it is clear that they were originally a tax upon all persons according to their ability to bear it, and were in no sense a tax laid upon real property alone. Again, the right hon. Gentleman has classed the highway rate as an hereditary burden upon land. That rate, however, stood at very much less than its present amount before the old turnpike road system of taxing those who used the roads was abolished; and certainly the addition since made to it cannot be regarded as being an hereditary burden upon land. Again, the abolition of the church rate has not relieved those who live in the country from the obligation of keeping their churches in repair. The right hon. Gentleman has admitted that the school rate is a new burden upon real property; but he appears to have forgotten that, in the greater number of the parishes in England, there is no school rate, and that in those parishes the landowners tax themselves voluntarily in order to keep up the schools. The right hon. Gentleman has alluded to the sanitary rates, which he said were equally borne by the towns and the rural districts, but he appeared to have overlooked the fact that in the rural districts most of the sanitary works which, in towns, would be done at the expense of the ratepayers, are carried out at the expense of the landowners without the imposition of a single penny on the rates. And when the right hon. Gentleman talks of the Land Tax, the poor rate, and the highway rate, as being hereditary burdens upon the land, it occurs to me that, in no very remote future, some Chancellor of the Exchequer might with equal fairness come down to this House and, pointing to the Death Duties now proposed to be imposed by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, might describe them as hereditary burdens upon real property, and therefore urge that they formed no argument against additional taxation upon that class of property. I think the right hon. Gentleman rather confused the real issue before the House when he attempted to deal with the relative burden of the rates upon agricultural land as compared with that upon the towns. I have never contended, and I do not believe that anyone has ever contended, that the vast increase in the rates which has undoubtedly taken place in this country during recent years has not been in the towns rather than in the rural districts; but what I have always contended is that the enormous growth in the value of property in towns has made the rates a comparatively easy burden to bear, whilst in the rural districts the depression in the value of agricultural land has made stationary and even reduced rates in reality a far heavier burden. It must be remembered that this is not a question of the rural districts against the towns; it is not a question of property against labour, but it is a question of the taxation of one class of property against another class of property. That, I think, will be admitted by the right hon. Gentleman. I am glad, I confess, that the right hon. Gentleman has not followed the Chancellor of the Exchequer in some of the fallacies that we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman. I have heard with satisfaction the admission from the Government Bench that the enormous increase in the rates has not fallen upon the great bulk of personalty. The Committee are now asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to equalise taxation between realty and personalty. The Committee must remember the total amount of taxation borne by both classes of property. I deny that the subject can be considered as a question of Death Duties only, apart from the whole question of taxation upon realty and upon personalty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave last night a statement in explanation of his calculation of the present burden of the Death Duties, first upon personalty and then upon realty. The right hon. Gentleman put the total amount of the Death Duties at present at £8,910,000 paid by personalty, and £1,150,000 paid by realty, making together rather more than £10,000,000. But in that calculation the right hon. Gentleman, I think, took credit for the whole of the Probate Duty paid by personalty—namely, that part of it which goes to the relief of local taxation as well as the part which goes to the Imperial Exchequer. That is, in my view, an absolutely unfair contention, and I think that the part devoted to the relief of local taxation ought not to be taken into consideration at all when we are considering the relative amount of Death Duties borne by realty and personalty. In common fairness, instead of saying that personalty bears £4,800,000, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have said that it only bears £2,400,000.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I spoke of what was levied under the head of Death Duties on other species of property.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Then I venture to repeat that the right hon. Gentleman should have taken into calculation the total tax borne by realty. I think that for purposes of this argument the right hon. Gentleman could only take the duty borne by personalty at £2,400,000, instead of £4,800,000. He was also wrong in saying that realty pays no Legacy Duty. It pays a sum which in 1888 was estimated at £200,000 a year on legacies charged upon or taking effect out of the real estate and on the proceeds of real estate directed to be sold. This sum should be transferred from the personalty to the realty side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's account. Making the two alterations which I have now suggested as absolutely necessary, instead of the totals of £8,910,000 and £1,150,000 which the right hon. Gentleman put before the Committee for personalty and realty respectively, the figures should be £6,390,000 for personalty and £1,350,000 for realty. That is, of course, on the face of it, I admit, a much larger contribution from personalty than from realty, but why did not the Chancellor of the Exchequer go on to compare the relative amounts of personalty and realty upon which the duties were charged? Everyone must be aware that the amount of personal property in this country is much larger than the amount of real property. The only fair basis of comparison of the relative burdens of the Death Duties is the amount of either class of property paying duty. The Return of 1885, which has been frequently quoted in this House, contains so much that is purely conjectural that I, for one, should be sorry to base any estimate upon it. In the year 1889, taking the average for the seven years ending in 1888, the annual value of personalty upon which Probate Duty was paid was £140,000,000, and of personal property paying Succession Duty £8,000,000. The annual value of real property on an average of seven years, taken in the same way, was £31,000,000 paying Succession Duty. Of course, that was only upon the life interest as taken by the Revenue Authorities. Taking into account that a large portion of realty consists of house property, it cannot be capitalised at more than 25 years' purchase.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to interpose for a moment? I can point out something to clear up the argument. It is immaterial what the relations are of the various classes of property, because I charge only on the principal value, and therefore it is unnecessary to go into calculations of the kind which the right hon. Gentleman has been suggesting. If one class of property is larger the charge upon it will be larger, and if another class is less the charge upon it will be less. The question of the relations of the different classes is wholly immaterial, and that is why I did not enter, and did not desire to enter, into those calculations. I only desired to consider the various incomes derived from each class of property.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: My complaint of the right hon. Gentleman's statement is that he has only commenced his calculation, and did not finish it. The right hon. Gentleman's figures were evidently accepted by hon. Members behind him as showing that the present system imposed an infinitely greater burden upon personalty than upon realty. Now, I want to show, if I can, what the real cause of the larger payment by personalty is, and I contend one great reason is the greater value of personalty than of realty. The net annual value of realty paying tax on an average of seven years ending 1888 was £57,000,000. To that must be added £8,000,000 of realty paying Legacy Duty, and £3,000,000 passing from husband to wife, not paying duty at all. Taking those figures, and taking the amounts of Death Duties paid at the date I have mentioned, there was a proportionate difference of £1,200,000 in favour of realty as against personalty; and if that amount of taxation had been added annually to realty the two classes of property would have been put *quâ* Death Duties upon precisely the same footing. On the other hand must fairly be taken into account the Land Tax, which in its inception was levied not merely upon realty, but upon personalty as well, and from which personalty was only exempted in comparatively recent years. The Land Tax, including, of course, that part of it which has been redeemed, comes to practically something like £2,000,000 a year. I do not wish to elaborate this argument. I have merely desired to call the attention of the Committee to it, as I deem it to be a figure of great importance in the present discussion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer now proposes what he considered to be an increase upon personalty of £2,130,000, and upon realty of £1,320,000. What I should like to know is whether the right hon. Gentleman includes in the former figure that proportion of the new Estate Duty arising from his graduated scale which would be devoted to local taxation? Because, if so, I venture to say that his estimate ought to be corrected in exactly the same way as I have shown is necessary in his account of the existing burden. It is not fair to compare the payments by personalty to Imperial taxation with the payments made by realty, and to credit personalty in the comparison with that portion of the Death Duties which goes to the local taxation fund. The right hon. Gentleman, taking the figures which I have quoted, arrived at the conclusion that after allowing for the relief to realty on Schedule A of the Income Tax, of the additional taxation that he proposed about £720,000 would fall on realty, and then he said he was astonished at his own moderation. I confess I was never more astonished than at the estimate of the right hon. Gentleman as to what the new tax would in his opinion produce. I hope during the course of the Debate the right hon. Gentleman will make some statement as to the data on which he founded that conclusion. The graduated increase in the rates ought, I think, to produce a much larger amount. I will venture to quote to the Committee a case which has been sent to me. It does not relate to agricultural property at all. It relates to ground-rents, which are very lightly taxed at present, because the Succession Duty has no regard to what the right hon. Gentleman called, in his Budget speech, the capital value of the property. This is the case that was put to me. Supposing a person of the age of 50 succeeds for life to 100 houses let on leases for 30 years at 1s. a year each or £5 a year in all. It is perfectly obvious that under the present system the Death Duty on that would be very small indeed. But if the right hon. Gentleman's proposal becomes law the man would have to pay an Estate Duty on the value of the houses, which in this case I have put, subject to the leases, might be estimated at £300 each, or £30,000 in all. This at 4½ per cent. would amount to a Death Duty of £1,350 on a property producing to the successor only £5 a year. That may be a perfectly fair increase. I do not want to argue that matter; but it seems to me that it is the taxation of an interest before that interest has come into possession.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is quite saleable.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: That is precisely the point to which I was coming. It would be absolutely impossible for a person to pay such a duty by instalments from the rents of his property. He would have to sell it, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggests, instead of leaving it to his family. Does the right hon. Gentleman really think that that would be an advisable result, seeing the enormous number of cases where ground-rents are at the present time held by the poorer classes? My right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford has put the case as to agricultural land. We have had no answer whatever on that matter. As my right hon. Friend pointed out, the Member for Midlothian denounced any attempt to tax such estates as he then described at their capital value as unwise and unjust, and he described it by epithets as strong as ever were used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his unregenerate days with regard to local option or Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman says you can borrow on mortgage and pay the Estate Duty. How is that money to be raised? It cannot be raised on a second mortgage. Nobody will lend on that, and therefore the money cannot be raised at all. The annual income from the property is not equal to paying the annual instalments for eight years.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The duty is only made on the actual value of the property.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: But how much percentage on the capital value of an agricultural estate does the right hon. Gentleman suppose the owner of the property puts into his pocket as the net annual income? That is the real difficulty. Supposing the capital value of an estate is taken at £30,000. Does the right hon. Gentleman think that the owner will receive £1,000 a year, and, if so, can he devote, as he would have to devote, £170 for the annual instalment of the duty upon that amount? No; there must be a forced sale, precisely as in the other case to which I have alluded, but with this difference—in the case of ground rents there are plenty of buyers, but in the case of agricultural estates in the South of England and Ireland, and in parts of Scotland, there are no buyers at all. Is not this a reason for giving consideration to the suggestions of my right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford, which has been supported by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean? It is clear that it is practically impossible for the owner with a property such as that to which I am alluding either to pay the annual instalments of the Estate Duty for eight years, or to borrow money on a mortgage to pay the amount. The Treasury could only get the tax by seizing the property. Why, then, should not the Treasury be called upon, after a fair valuation on both sides, to take a certain part of the property, in the way my right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford suggested, instead of the tax? Parliament has not recently shown any reluctance to take land either by purchase or by hiring from owners whenever it was desirable in the public interest that land should be so taken. It is, therefore, only fair to the owners of property that this suggestion should be fully considered by the Treasury. I do not want to detain the Committee by going into details. It is impossible fully to consider them before we have the Bill before us. But this, at any rate, is clear—that the new Estate Duty at the rates proposed to be charged is so much in excess of the Death Duty at present chargeable that it must increase considerably the burdens upon real property. Add to this the substitution in the Succession Duty of the capital value in place of the annual value. In speaking on this subject in 1888, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian said that in his opinion to charge realty with Succession Duty on the life interest instead of on the capital value was practically to diminish by half the tax on realty. If that be so, will not the substitution of the capital value for the life interest as the basis of the charge practically double the Succession Duty? Without entering at any length on the question, I should like to touch on the principle of graduation. Of course, the Committee knows very well that the principle of graduation has been accepted in several parts of our existing finance. The House Duty and other duties are to some extent graduated duties. But this, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean admitted, is graduation to an extent which no other country has attempted. My belief is that it will be largely evaded in the case of personalty. It is so easy in the case of certain securities to hand over personalty as a *bonâ fide* gift, an innocent gift, as the right hon. Baronet expressed it, during the lifetime of the person who owns the property to the heir in whom he places confidence so that it shall not come under the Death Duties; and the temptation—nay, to many consciences the justification—for such action will be the high graduation scale proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman may have been wise, for this reason, in estimating his receipts from this increased tax at a low figure, but is that a very moral position for a Chancellor of the Exchequer? Is it a wise or defensible policy to introduce a graduated tax of this kind, with the knowledge that it is likely to be largely evaded? I do not want to pursue the subject further now; but for these and other reasons we ought to have some fuller statement as to the data on which the right hon. Gentleman estimates the proceeds from this increased taxation, with examples of the manner in which that increased taxation will work in the case of different classes of estates. So far as the distinction between the burdens on realty and personalty are concerned, the right hon. Gentleman is guilty of the unfairness of imposing additional burdens on realty, without any consideration of the other kinds of taxation to which realty is subject, and these burdens will be specially felt in the agricultural districts, which are so much distresed that they are, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford has said, absolutely unable to bear any increased burden at all. The result of imposing this increased burden will be not merely ruinous to some owners of property, but will in many other cases prevent landlords from spending on their estates money which is essential, not merely for the improvement of the estates, but for the retention of the farmers who are now their tenants, and for the employment of the agricultural labourers who every day, from want of such employment, are flocking to the towns from the rural districts. It will be some time—it may be some years—before the full effect of these proposals, if they should become law, will be really felt and understood. But, in my belief, the right hon. Gentleman has taken a step which is not justified by the existing pressure of taxation upon realty and personalty, and a step which will be deeply injurious to those parts of the country in which I am specially interested.

Sir W. HARCOURT: What is the object of the speeches to which we have been treated to-night? The claim is now made that landowners are not to bear an equal burden of taxation with other people. [*Cries of* "No!"] I will show that it is so; that it is not a new claim on the part of the landed interest of this country. To-day it is put on the ground of agricultural distress, but it is put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol on the ground that the value of personalty is largely in excess of the value of realty in this country. That was the claim put forward 100 years ago, when land was the predominant wealth of the country, and when the most powerful Minister whoever ruled in this country was defeated by the landed interest on the ground that they were not to be taxed upon the same footing as other people. When Mr. Pitt proposed the Succession Duty, which is the equivalent of the present proposal, it was defeated, but ultimately he had in his favour the casting vote of the Speaker. The claim was then set up that land was not to be taxed, though it was by far the wealthiest and strongest interest in the country at the time. Ever since there has been a traditional belief on the part of the landed interest that they had a right to some special exemption. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] You say "No, no," but it is not an hour ago since the hon. Member for the Thirsk Division put the claim upon a very plain ground. He said—

> "Land is raw material, and, according to all economists, raw material ought not to be taxed."

Mr. GRANT LAWSON: I quoted the Land Restoration League as holding that land is raw material.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Yes; but, in addition to the quotation, the hon. Member laid it down as his own proposition. Hon. Gentlemen opposite think there is a special quality about land which ought to exempt it from being treated like other property. What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh, and that belief is just as strong to-day as it was in the time of Mr. Pitt. I have much more sympathy with the ground put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, when he spoke of the distressed condition of the agricultural interest; but the right hon. Gentleman is mistaken in the belief that the present times are worse, or so bad, as several other times which have been known during the present century. Anyone who reads the Reports made in the years preceding or following 1835 will find expressions quite as strong as any to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred in more recent Reports as showing the condition of the agricultural interest, with the price of wheat not much higher than it is at present.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Land was not then out of cultivation to the same extent as now.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I remember Mr. Henley—who was an old Member of this House—telling me that the whole country lying round the district where I live was out of cultivation. That state of things does not exist in the same district now. Agricultural distress has been felt before quite as severely as to-day, and from that fact I draw the hope that as it passed away before so it will pass away again. But it does not follow that because an industry was distressed that its fair share of taxation is to be borne by other classes of the community. The same claim might with equal justice be made by the cotton, the iron, and other industries, that when any of these industries suffer depression it should be indemnified at the expense of the community. But I do not find that such a claim is put forward by any interest except the landed interest. It is said that the land has been subjected to a greater increase of rates than any other interest. But that is not so. The burden of rates is now heavier on the urban house population. The right hon. Gentleman said he appealed in favour of the small men — the yeomen; but the proposals in our scheme will be a relief to these men, because the Death Duty on estates under £1,000 will be lower than it is at present. Will any hon. Gentleman opposite tell me how many acres do £1,000 represent? It depends upon the value of land per acre now. Is its value per acre £10, £20, £50, or £100?

An hon. Member: No; £5 an acre.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Well, how many £5's are there in £1,000? At £5, £1,000 would represent 200 acres of land; and every man with 200 acres would benefit by the change. I thought I should catch hon. Members opposite by inviting them to put their own valuation on land. The right hon. Member for Sleaford is familiar, from experience gained elsewhere, with "selling stakes," in which an owner is obliged to put a value on a horse, and, if it wins, to sell it at the price he has named.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, that in the case of selling stakes the horse was put up to auction and, if the set price were exceeded, the owner got the benefit of half the excess.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I confess I am not familiar with the details; but the right hon. Gentleman seemed to desire in some form to put land on the footing of "selling stakes," and to sell it to the Government upon the price put upon it. There has been a great deal said about the burdens put upon land. In my opinion, from the point of view from which this Bill is framed, that question does not enter into the subject at all. That is why I did not enter into it in my Budget speech. When the value of land is settled, all the charges upon it are discounted, whether tithe, land tax, or rates. When you buy the land you buy it for more or less in consequence of these burdens being placed upon it; therefore, the question does not arise whether these burdens are more or less. Consols are bought subject to no charge at all, and therefore at a large price; less is given for other securities that are subject to charges. When you buy land as a commodity subject to certain charges you give less for it than when it is not subject to them. Therefore, the working of a plan founded upon ascertained value is, to use the language of the Money Market, like buying "ex charges." It is the case with everything. You buy an estate for less in consequence of there being charges upon it. Everybody in his senses who is buying a house or any other property, in the first place ascertains what the charges are upon it. When he has ascertained them he deducts them from the full value. Therefore, this charge excludes all these considerations; and I do not enter upon the question whether the rates are increased or decreased. If they have increased the value will be less; if they have decreased the principal value will be more. Therefore, all these matters are beside the question. The right hon. Member for Bristol said that when land becomes unsaleable the State must buy it. Why should the State buy it? The right hon. Member for Midlothian was quoted as having referred to taxation from the social point of view; but it does not follow from that that we have any right in governing ourselves to determine these questions by social considerations. I do not agree with hon. Members opposite as to the prospect of the alarming results they have predicted. Such predictions have been made before. When the Succession Duty was first imposed, it was said that country gentlemen would be driven away by it. There was the same outcry when the right hon. Member for Midlothian proposed an increase estimated to produce £2,000,000. Earl Cairns and Mr. Malins and others—the lawyers on the opposite side — said the exaction would be £20,000,000; in the result the increase was £800,000. That only shows how people may delude themselves upon these subjects. Similar predictions were made and falsified in connection with the repeal of the Corn Laws and the taking off of the Timber Duties. Whenever you touch land in any way it is always said that country gentlemen will disappear; but, fortunately, they do not. For 40 years they have paid the Succession Duty in spite of all predictions to the contrary, and I venture to say that, long after this proposal has passed, they will remain respected and honoured as they are today. Therefore, these arguments and considerations, I confess, do not affect me much in proposing fair and equal taxation. The right hon. Gentleman has asked me for the particulars on which the valuation is based; but that is not a reasonable demand. When I am proposing a new tax the authorities of the Inland Revenue give the best assistance they can from the materials at their disposal. These involve a number of complicated considerations on a review of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes proposals on his own responsibility. It was on the conclusions arrived at by these authorities with the materials at their disposal that I based my estimate as to what the Income Tax would produce. It is not usual to give those estimates to the House. Hon. Gentlemen may have reasons for differing from my estimate; then let them state what their view is and what are the grounds on which they proceed. In connection with the question of mortgages, I would point out that when an estate is charged with a mortgage, and an allowance of 10 per cent. is made on the interest, if the mortgage is very large—say, one-half—the allowance becomes very much larger than it is on a free estate. The tax is paid in the first instance by the owner, who recovers one-half from the mortgagee without deduction, and so pays only 10 per cent. on a moiety.

Mr. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, it amounted to 20 per cent., because the owner had to bear all expenses of maintenance.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman has not had time to consider the matter. If he will take a night to consider it he will find he is wrong.

Mr. HENEAGE: No; I will not take time.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It will be found there is maintenance in both cases. The right hon. Member for Bristol has repeated what I have always thought an extraordinary fallacy, which was ridiculed by the right hon. Member for St. George's when he divided the Probate Duty. The right hon. Baronet said that, because the right hon. Gentleman gave away half the Probate Dute, therefore personal property did not bear the same burden as before. This is the most extraordinary idea I ever heard. It reminds me of the old couplet—

> "My wound is great because it is so small;
> If it were greater it were none at all."

Apparently, if the right hon. Gentleman had given away the whole of the Probate Duty it would have been no burden at all. I have never been able to comprehend from what confusion of ideas that fallacy has proceeded. I have nothing whatever to do with the question of local taxation; that is discarded altogether. To talk of the Death Duty being reduced by the amount of that which is given away is a fallacy which I cannot accept for a moment. I am not alarmed at the warnings with which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol concluded his speech on the subject of graduation. I shall be extremely surprised if the right hon. Gentleman takes issue on that point. At any rate, the Government are perfectly prepared to meet such an issue when it is taken; for it is my deep conviction that there is in the minds of those people in the country —not the ignorant people, but those who have had the most opportunity of considering the matter—a belief that the principle of graduation is a just principle, and that whenever an issue is taken on the subject it will be confirmed by the great majority of the people.

MR. HENEAGE said, he had not intended to enter into this question in a controversial spirit; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when they asked for information which they had a right to have, turned round on them and maligned the landlords of the country. He (Mr. Heneage) was sure the agriculturists did not wish to escape from their just burdens, though they had had hard times. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he thought, might have given them a great deal more information than he had done. In the whole history of Parliament never had so great a change been made in the taxation of the country and so scanty an amount of information given to the House. The right hon. Gentleman told them he could not give them any data. But if he could not, what reliance could they place upon the estimate he had put before them? Either the Treasury Authorities had based their calculations on some data or they had chanced them, and if they had chanced them those calculations were not worth the paper they were written on. If, however, the calculations were based on data, why could not the Government give such data to the House, and allow the House to judge of the fairness or unfairness of the proposition? The right hon. Gentleman just now dealt with what he called the 10 per cent. reduction he was going to allow. He (Mr. Heneage) would not discuss the point, but the right hon. Gentleman said he was practically giving the landowner twice the amount he was entitled to where the land was mortgaged for one-half that value. Could anything be more absurd? The landowner had to keep up and maintain the whole estate and pay the whole expenses of it whether it was mortgaged by half or three-quarters, and he was as much entitled to his return on that, scanty as it was, as if the whole property were his own. Now, he wished to deal with the proposal to assimilate personalty and realty from a practical point of view. In his opinion, the whole question of the fairness of the tax depended largely on its mode of application. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid down two premises about the Death Duties when bringing in his Budget. The first was, that the State had a right to a share of the *corpus* of the whole property. They had heard it called the *corpus;* they had heard it called the capital value, and they had heard it called by another name to-night, but they had never been told what it was, in relation to realty. The second proposition of the right hon. Gentleman was that the State had an inferior title to those who shared the property. If that was the case, the demand made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford was a legitimate one, because, if the State had an inferior title to take its share in the *corpus*, he (Mr. Heneage) did not see how it could call in those who had to share it afterwards to mortgage it, and they had a right to say, "If you do require the *corpus* take a piece of the land." What he (Mr. Heneage) wanted to know was what was the *corpus* of the land taken? It did not include land mortgaged or on which both mortgages and charges might have to be deducted, and which, therefore, had no reference to the new Estate Duty; but when they came to consider what was the value of the property he imagined there was a great difference between the value of personalty and of realty. He would point out that there were two kinds of personalty, the first consisting of Consols, and railway shares, and investments which could be easily realised, and which there was no difficulty in taxing; and the second, personalty invested in trade, which was paying perhaps 8 or 10 per cent. In neither case would there be any difficulty in paying the tax. There were, again, two classes of realty: first, that which was entirely separate from agricultural land, such as leasehold house property—and however hard the duty might fall on that it was to a certain extent personalty, and could be valued and sold or mortgaged. The other class of realty was agricultural land. With regard to this, he wanted to know, first of all, what was the *corpus* they were going to tax; and, secondly, how were they going to tax it? In Lincolnshire, although farms were let at 30 and 40 per cent. less than formerly, and though the cost of the maintenance of property had risen from 12 to 20, 25, and 30 per cent., land was unsaleable piecemeal, and unless the whole estate was disposed of at once. They were told that under the Bill the existing Probate, Account, and additional Succession Duty would cease to exist, and that there would be one Estate Duty levied on the principal value of all property that passed on death, whether real or personal, settled or unsettled. They were told that the principal value having been taken, the duty would be graduated according to the scale set forth in the Resolution. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that the whole of a property would be taxed in the same way. Take an estate of the capital value of £100,000. The State under the new Estate Duty would claim £6,000. In the case of personalty that would be about one and a-half year's interest, and in the case of trade investments about one year's interest. In the case of realty—leasehold property—it would probably be about the same as personalty. But what would it be in the case of an estate of 4,000 acres which produced, say, £1 an acre or £4,000 a year? How many years' purchase did they propose to put on that? If they took it the same as they took realty, in land and houses—or town property—and put it at 20 or 25 years' purchase, it would bring in £100,000. But were they going to tax the whole of that? That would be extremely unfair. In the first three classes of property he had mentioned—the two cases of personalty and the case of leasehold property—there were no outgoings except the Income Tax; but in the case of agricultural property, they must deduct 25 per cent. first of all for maintenance. Why did he say that? Because the expenses were not only the same, but in most cases more than they were before the rentals were reduced 40 per cent., and therefore the maintenance, which was formerly 12 per cent., was now actually 20 per cent. on the reduced rentals, and they must add at least 5 per cent. for the extra cost thrown on the landowner for what was properly tenants' work, but which the tenants could not afford to do. It was usual to put into agreements that tenants were to do certain painting, and work in connection with fence renewals, gates, cleaning out water-courses, and so forth. The tenants, however, had not the money to do these things. Anyone who had anything to do with the management of an estate — and he had managed one without agents for 25 years, and was familiar with every detail of such management — could appreciate the force of the old adage, "A stitch in time saves nine." A landlord would rather do repairs at a small cost than wait until a tenant went and then pay ten times as much to make good the property. Therefore, he maintained it was under the mark to say that the maintenance of an estate cost 25 per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked him (Mr. Heneage) to take a night to think over this. Well, he had spent a good many hours in his office yesterday trying to find out the real truth of statements made to him by landowners as to the probable result of this tax. He had taken out very carefully all the maintenance of a purely agricultural estate, and he found that for the last three years it had been an average of 26 per cent., and he had not charged in that one sixpence for office, or clerks, or schools for which he paid. He thought he might give that as a concrete case. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer doubted it he should be glad to give him an abstract case, having the figures in his pocket. In addition to these outlays, there were the rates and taxes, which came now to 9 per cent.; therefore it was not too much to say that the outgoings of an estate were 35 per cent. before the landlord touched anything. Let them look at that in a concrete case. Take the case of a nominal rental of £4,000 per annum. For outgoings and maintenance deduct £1,000, for rates and taxes £360, and a quarter of the £6,000 Probate Duty and interest, which was £1,640, amounting to £3,000 altogether, leaving the owner of the land only £1,000 a year for the first four years—probably for the first five years, because he would have to pay, under the new scheme, interest on the money due, whereas under the Land Tax an abatement was received. That was a serious thing, but what would be the ultimate results? Radical stump orators, following the lead of the right hon. Gentleman, would go about the country saying—"Oh! don't bother about this tax, because it was only the landlords who would be hurt." He denied it. The persons who would be hurt more than anybody else during the first five years after the death of the owner would be the tenants and the labourers. It would be absolutely necessary for the successor to cut down the expenses to the smallest possible amount. It would be impossible to give abatements to his tenants, or allow them to get into arrears, and he would be compelled to keep them up to their agreements, otherwise dilapidations would accumulate. What, then, would become of the labourers? And would not all this affect the trade of the district? They in Lincolnshire knew what it was to have very few resident landlords, and they knew what effect that had both upon the employment of labour and upon trade interests in agricultural towns. He therefore submitted that this was not only a landowner's question, because many estates would be forced into the market, and heaven knows who would be the new landlords! It was necessary to know what was the basis of valuation. Was it to be the rental after the charge for the maintenance and the taxes had been deducted, or was it to be the whole rental? How many years' purchase were to be taken? He was told that in Wales, where there were many small holdings, the land was sold at 24 years' purchase. An hon. Member opposite had told them that land was not worth more than £5 an acre. He did not know what number of years' purchase they would call that; but he was certain of one thing—that in Lincolnshire at the present moment they could not sell a farm apart from a large property at 15 years' purchase; indeed, he did not believe that farms were saleable at all. If the charge the right hon. Gentleman proposed was a fair one, he (Mr. Heneage) was not going to object, but he did think he had a right to ask for information and to know whether it was a fair tax; and those upon whose calculations it was based knew what they were doing. The right hon. Gentleman appealed to the landlords as to whether he had not done something for them by granting a 10 per cent. abatement on the Income Tax in respect of maintenance. It was something, and it would have been gratefully received 20 years ago; but, as he had shown, the real cost of maintenance was now 25 per cent., and not 10 per cent. But even supposing there had been reason for some gratitude the right hon. Gentleman had taken it away by his Beer Duty, which would reduce the price of barley by at least 2s. a quarter. The gratitude which the landowners might feel for the abatement in question was very much watered down by what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done in other ways. He (Mr. Heneage) had only risen with the object of trying, if possible, to get some information. He regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for India had been in such a hurry to speak before anyone, but one or two gentlemen on the Front Bench opposite had taken part in the discussion and had not allowed independent Members to ask questions. He hoped, however, that before the evening was out some other Member of the Government would give the Committee more information than it had had up to the present time.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said that, although of course he listened with great respect and attention to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he could not say, like the hon. Member who preceded him, that he rose in a conciliatory mood or merely for the purpose of asking information. No doubt they would receive all the information they desired in the course of the lengthened Debates which must take place on the Budget; but his present object in rising was to express the deep disappointment with which those interested in land regarded the Budget, a feeling which was not sensibly mitigated by the very slender concession made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to the Income Tax. For that concession they of course thanked him, but, after all, it was the very smallest of small mercies, and would have no countervailing effect upon the grievous injury about to be inflicted on the landed interest by the provision of the Budget as to the Death Duties. It was not fair to level up the landed interest in respect to direct taxation with the other propertied classes when at the same time it had to bear such a heavy burden of local taxation. He was one to join in the chorus of "No, no" which greeted the remark of the right hon. Gentleman, that those concerned in land wished to exempt themselves from the burdens of taxation. They had no such desire; but when they were burdened so heavily and so unjustly in respect of local taxation, they ought not to be treated upon the equalisation principle in respect of direct taxation. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would relieve them from the burdens of local taxation they would take the chance of the principal valuation theory in estimating the Succession Duty, and he was sure they would mightily gain by the change. The Secretary of State for India, in an elaborate statistical analysis, had sought to show that the burden of local taxation was less upon the rural classes at the present time than it had been in two past generations, but in order to come to that conclusion the right hon. Gentleman excluded half the burdens upon land. They had always argued that there was no reason why real property and agricultural land should bear the entire burden of the Poor Law. That was not necessarily a burden incidental to the land alone. In the same way, why had the right hon. Gentleman excluded the highway rate from his calculation? The abolition of turnpikes was a silly and unjust proceeding, the result of the Act being to place upon landowners the burden of keeping up the roads for the benefit of classes who contributed nothing to the land. He was aware he might be reminded that his own Party took this step, but that did not make it a right thing, and that unfortunate act had resulted in throwing upon the land the burden of maintaining roads for bicyclists, for the general merchant, for travellers, and for other classes who represented traffic that brought no benefit to the land. With the exception of tithe and Land Tax they did not admit that any of the burdens now thrown upon land were necessarily incidental to land or inherent in landed property. They were burdens which ought not to be borne exclusively by owners of land. He demurred, therefore, most absolutely to the calculations of the right hon. Gentleman who represented the Local Government Board in the House with so much ability last Session. But whether it were true or not that the burden of local taxation was less now than it had been at any time in the last 50 or 60 years, they asserted that it was more than they were able to bear. Landed property in this country was fast approaching the condition of prairie value. When they considered all that the landowner had to do and the burdens he had to bear, what had he to spend upon himself or for himself? When he had paid his tithes, his rates and taxes, his agency charges, and when he had paid for the up-keep of his property, and paid his various local subscriptions to schools and the like—when he had done everything that a gentleman ought to do for his farms—what had he left? He had almost nothing. They were in a descending scale, and eventually the landlord would get little more for his farm than he got for his park or garden. It was no doubt a very interesting thing to own a farm and for a man to think himself a little "monarch of all he surveyed," but there was little more to be got from it than from any other ornamental piece of land. It had not quite come to that yet, but they were on a descending scale which would reach to that, and under such circumstances it was a most unfortunate time to throw additional burdens on the land. Everything depended upon valuation, and he hoped the House would take note of the explanation given on that point by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby. The right hon. Gentleman had shown that when the up-keep and all these other things were accounted for a fair valuation of the land would bring out almost nothing, on the theory, at least, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that all that was to be touched was the margin. If the margin meant that which a man would have to spend or which he could send to his bankers the sum would be so small, if fairly calculated, as to be almost valueless. There might be a valuation made by the taxing officer, or the Inland Revenue Department, or the Treasury, but it would not agree with the valuation of those who had to bear the cost. Those who had to bear the cost said that if this margin the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of were fairly calculated, it would be so small as to leave scarcely anything to the landlord. As for the former misfortunes which befel the land which had been adverted to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Gentleman had spoken of all that had happened in Oxfordshire in the year 1835 or thereabouts. No doubt land in those days was so burdened as to be worth less than nothing. As the Americans said when the value of land was depreciated, "It is so bad that you cannot give it away." No doubt land in Oxfordshire in those days was in such a state as that, still the misfortune was not to be compared with the misfortune that now hung over the land. What was the cause of the former misfortunes? It was bad legislation in an utterly inefficient and unworkable Poor Law. But that was a remediable matter, and the evil was remedied by legislation. But what legislation could remedy the evils that now threatened landowners? Those evils were such that neither legislation nor Kings could cure. Everyone who understood the condition of the British Empire and of the world must be aware of that. These evils were of a permanent character, and would become aggravated year by year, and that was one among hundreds of other reasons why no fresh burden could be imposed. It was a suitable suggestion that the State should take this Succession Duty in the shape of its pound of flesh—that was to say, should take a piece of the land. Let the Treasury take the land. It would learn a useful lesson. It would find out what was the real and true value of the land. They would see what a small fringe or margin there was; they would be like Sindbad with a mountain on their back. Politically and financially they would have a millstone round their neck, and would recognise at last what the burdens on the land were. They would be made to feel the evils they inflicted on the landowners. He did not know that without quoting statistics he could enter further upon his denunciation—for that was what it came to—of the measure now being forced upon the House. This measure knocked a nail into the coffin of the dying land interest—for he believed that as a paying financial concern the land interest was dying. No doubt it would exist for social and political purposes, but when one thought of all the misfortunes that fell on the great landed interest one could only say, "God help the man who succeeds with this heavy Succession Duty hung round his neck." When one thought of all the landowner's mortgages and burdens and liabilities, and, on the other hand, of all the honourable responsibilities which he could not evade, it was clear that he could have nothing left for himself to spend and no balance at his bankers, so far as his landed property was concerned. Could the Government wonder if they said that this Succession Duty was only another means devised for robbing the poor? [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members might treat the matter lightly, but he believed that the poorest class of persons in this land were those unfortunate gentlemen who had to look to their landed property alone as their one source of income. No doubt many landowners held property of other kinds, but those who had nothing but real estate to depend on were in a miserable condition indeed. They were poor in the true, economic, moral, and social sense of the term. It was on this class of men and on this class of property that this new burden was to be imposed. This was admittedly a time of agricultural depression. Could the Government wonder if agriculturists regarded the imposition of this new burden as oppressive? The Government could not be surprised if they saw the landed interest throughout the country offering the most strenuous opposition to every stage of the measure.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) said, that most extravagant ideas had been formed with regard to the great revenue and enormous financial advantages to be derived from a readjustment of the Death Duties. He believed, however, that as a matter of fact it would be found that the Government would derive at the end of the whole operation only a very moderate addition to the Exchequer by the re-adjustment of the Death Duties. He felt also that the time was not very appropriate for any increased taxation to be levied on the landed interest of this country. That interest, which just now was sorely depressed, was not confined to the landlord class alone, but intimately connected with it was the whole agricultural population and the inhabitants of the villages. The Government were, no doubt, imposing an increased burden upon the whole agricultural industry, and it was idle to suppose that it would fall upon the landlords alone. If the burden of altered taxation fell solely upon the landed interest, no doubt there would be a strong case for resisting it, but the increased taxation would fall also upon townland and houses and upon property in the neighbourhood of towns—building and other land which had not been in this depressed condition. He was bound to say that, with reference to the re-adjustment of the Death Duties in regard to town properties, the Government had a very strong case. He hoped that in the practical dealing with this matter the Government would endeavour, as far as possible, to adjust the burden that it might fall as lightly as possible upon the agricultural interest, and might fall with due weight upon real estate and property in towns which had increased largely in value, and was well able to bear increased taxation. No doubt the proposal before the Committee was the result of a good deal of agitation for the reform of the Death Duties, and he did not think, now that it was made by the responsible Government, it would be possible to resist it in principle. It was difficult to say that one class of property ought to have exceptional treatment. The two things being equal, real property and personal property ought to be subject to equal taxation. In the past, land, and especially agricultural land, had borne special burdens, and it had consequently been relieved of a certain amount of Imperial taxation. This had been, to a certain extent, re-adjusted, and he was not prepared to say that the time had not arrived when it was necessary to reconsider the principles of taxation as applied to the Death Duties. It was, of course, an advantage to the owners of real estate to be charged upon the life interest instead of upon the capital value, but it was not in some cases so great an advantage as some people imagined. It was not such an enormous advantage where the life was a young life, because the capitalised value of the life interest was in that case very great; but where the life was an average life, or an old life, there was a considerable advantage to the successor. He knew of a case where, under special circumstances, the Succession Duty at the present time would exceed the new Estate Duty proposed to be charged on the capital value of the property. It was the case of a freehold let on lease, and bringing in £120 a year. It was in Deptford, a part of London where property was not very high in value, and a Municipal Authority, which wished to purchase the property, offered £1,381, a little over 11 years' purchase. Now, according to the Succession Tables if the owner were to die and were to be succeeded by a man of 44, the amount on which the Government would be able to claim duty would be £1,684. He knew of another case where rents, from freehold property leased, amounting to £43 a year produced at an auction £1,325, or about 31 years' purchase. He cited these cases to show the enormous differences there were in the capital value of town property. He should like to say a word or two with reference to settled property. He would first take the case of an estate producing a clear £5,000 a year. He assumed that the property was in strict settlement, a father who was first tenant-for-life, and a son who was second tenant-for-life, with remainder to his issue for an estate tail. There would be two successions—the first when the tenant-for-life died, and the second when the second tenant-for-life died and the tenant-in-tail came into possession, and he assumed for the purpose of the argument that the second tenant-for-life and the tenant-in-tail succeeded at the age of 44. Under the present system the Government would get out of this settlement £3,500, but under the system now proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer they would get £8,750, or more than double the receipt under the existing system. In the case of an estate of £2,000 a year settled, under similar circumstances the Government would get £1,400 under the existing system, and £2,750 under the new system. In the case of an estate settled in the same way, and bringing in £200 a year, the Government would, under present circumstances, get £84, and under the new duty they would get £200. In the case of a settled estate, there would be a practical difficulty in raising money to provide for the duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested that provision should be made in the Bill giving the tenant-for-life power to charge the estate with an amount sufficient to pay the duty—in fact, to make a mortgage on the estate for the purpose. That mortgage would have to come behind any existing mortgages. In the case of an estate that was mortgaged to its full value there would be a very considerable difficulty in raising the duty by mortgage. Imagine a large estate, mortgaged perhaps to the extent of £100,000, and the tenant-for-life having to raise from £2,000 to £5,000. He would have no more chance of borrowing that sum behind the £100,000 mortgage than he would have of flying. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to deal with this practical difficulty. He would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that under such circumstances the tenant-for-life might be allowed to pay on the capitalised value of his life interest, and that the claim to the full duty on the whole estate might be postponed. The authorities at Somerset House did postpone payments now by arrangement. Something certainly would have to be done in reference to a great many estates which were heavily mortgaged, or there would be great difficulty on the part of the Government in getting the money. The main question was, how the Government were to arrive at the capital value? He supposed that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer talked about "principal value" he meant capital value. Was the capital value to be the saleable value? If so, it could not be arrived at except by putting the property into the market for sale. If it was to be the estimated value, how was it to be estimated? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was to be fixed by the authorities at Somerset House, subject to appeal in a Court of Law. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must have greater confidence in the knowledge of the authorities at Somerset House than most Members had. The valuing of property in London alone was a most difficult thing. He had given the Committee instances of two London properties, one of which was valued at about 10 years' and the other at 31 years' purchase, and when one considered the complicated interests that arose under the leasehold system, one saw at once how difficult the valuation of London was. Properties all over the country would have to be valued. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke) had said that the authorities had been too lax, inasmuch as they had accepted valuations far below the proper amount. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that the value should in future be increased. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the successor to an estate would get the most eminent valuer and take his valuation to Somerset House, where it would be accepted. But eminent valuers differed materially in their opinion, and if the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean (Sir C. Dilke) were to prevail, the Government would be very exact in this matter, and if the duty did not produce quite so much as the Chancellor of the Exchequer expected, the authorities of Somerset House would have an intimation that they were to see that the full value was paid. That would lead to Government valuers, who would be employed to act for the Government, to survey and value the properties throughout the country. He need hardly say that when they came to deal with the question of capital value of properties in London, and the varied interests connected with it, they would have the keenest discussions as to the value to be put on property for Estate Duty; then there would be appeals and a contest of surveyors, who were not in the habit of charging light fees. Lawyers charged fairly well, but his experience was that they were not in it with surveyors for charging. But they would not only have a contest of surveyors, but they would have a lawsuit as well, and a case like a compensation case would be fought out in the Law Courts. Was that desirable? Was it desirable that the valuation should rest upon estimated value to be debated and discussed on the reports of surveyors and fought out in Courts of Law upon the expert evidence of surveyors? He must say he saw great practical difficulties and great expense inflicted upon people in connection with the levying of these duties. If they paid anything the Government chose to ask, well and good, but he doubted whether they would be in that submissive frame of mind, therefore he thought this would be attended with great difficulties and enormous expense. But what other course was there? Why not, to a certain extent, adopt the course that at present prevailed; why not do what was done at Somerset House at the present time. Why not divide the property into classes; put on the classes of property a scale. Why not take the annual value, deducting from it all outgoings, showing the clear net value, capitalise that netvalue, and deduct from that all the charges upon the estate? That was well understood at the present time at Somerset House, as it was the course that prevailed in reference to the existing Estate Duty. He produced one of the forms on which the payment of the present Estate Duty was paid, and on that form the particulars were — description of property, gross rack rental or annual value, landlords' outgoings, such as repairs, insurance, &c., net annual value, estimated number of years' purchase, and the gross capital value. Then the amounts were brought out, and from the amount of capitalised value of the net income the amount of incumbrances and charges was deducted, showing the clear net value of the property. On this amount the present Estate Duty was charged. That was the system that at present prevailed. They could lay down a scale of valuations applicable to particular kinds of property, say 25 years' purchase for London ground rents, from 15 to 20 years' purchase for freehold houses, and so many years' purchase, according to the length of lease, for certain leasehold houses. If they did that, they could work out the duty without introducing the uncertainty, and the complications, and the expense which lie behind and would be introduced by the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. Why the system that at present prevailed should not be adapted to this new duty he could not for the life of him understand. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that was all very well on a rising market, but when property was decreasing in value it would work against the interest of the owners of property. It was odd that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should make use of that argument. If it worked against the Government in one case, it might possibly work for the Government in the other. He did not believe it would be beyond the ability of surveyors to form a scale applicable to particular properties, and charging the duty on the capital value according to the net income derived from the particular property in each scale. He made a present of the suggestion to the Secretary to the Treasury. He did not put the suggestion forward with absolute confidence, but he suggested it for consideration as to whether it was not a more certain and more satisfactory mode of arriving at the real value of property than the mode which the right hon. Gentleman suggested, which was most uncertain and calculated to be most expensive, and was one of the great difficulties in the way of carrying out what the right hon. Gentleman proposed. There was no difficulty in calculating the capital value of a large portion of the personal property of the country, but when they came to the property known as real estate they were met with difficulties. He believed these proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were proposals it was difficult in principle to resist. He thought special provision should be made with regard to that class of property that was most depressed and which, at the present time, was practically unsaleable, but upon the broad proposition of equalising the Death Duties the feeling of the general public was in favour of it. He hoped the Government, however, would extend all the consideration they were capable of to the owners of agricultural land, in which he believed the country would support them. The people in the towns had no desire to see the agricultural interest unduly burdened or treated with any want of consideration. On the contrary, they hoped the Government would as far as they could adapt the charge to the special difficulties of the agricultural situation and of those men who unfortunately had agricultural property.

Mr. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.) said, that at the commencement of his remarks he would like to state that he did not speak as one who had any expectations; his expectations he had realised, and he need hardly say that as they were all in land they did not come up quite to what might have been expected. When they were asked to consent to these proposals which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made, though they might not perhaps be in the position of having expectations, they had to consider those who came after them, and not only those who came after them, but those who lived on their estates, those whom, he maintained, would not be in any way benefited, but rather injured, by the proposals—namely, the labourers and tenant-farmers on the estate. He understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to assert that they who were interested in land, who knew something about the management of land, were making a claim for land to be treated in an exceptional way. Now, he did not think that was the case at all. When he stated that land in other countries was only taxed to the extent of 5 per cent., while the land in this country was taxed to the extent of 13 per cent., he did not think that in resisting these proposals, as some of them were going to do, and as, speaking for himself personally, he intended to do, that they were making any claim for land to be treated in an exceptional manner. He need hardly remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who knew it as well as he did, that the rates were only levied on real property—that was to say, on land and houses. He asked the Committee to compare the contributions to the Public Purse of two men who invested £1,000 each—one in land and houses and the other in some British or foreign security. Supposing both men lived for 20 years, and paid an average Income Tax of 6d. in the £1 and rates at 2s. 6d. in the £1, and received interest at the rate of 5 per cent. on their investment. "A," who invested in securities, would pay Income Tax at the rate of 25s. a year, or £25 in 20 years. He would pay Death Duty at 3 per cent., or £30 in all, and his total contribution to the Public Purse in 20 years would be £55. On the other hand, "B," who had invested his £1,000 in real estate, would have to pay, including all charges for the 20 years, £157 10s., or three times the amount he would have had to pay had he invested his money in British or foreign securities. From these figures it was perfectly obvious that land was unfairly treated as compared with personal property. He understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to state that the rates, &c., were charged on the land, and when people bought it they did so minus those charges, and, therefore, ought not to say anything about this proposal of the new Estate Duty. That would be all very well in the case of intending purchasers of land, but how did it affect the owners of land at the present time? He did not think it would be much consolation to them to think this proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would, according to the right hon. Gentleman, be an extra charge on land, and take so much off the value for selling purposes.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The taxing value of the land would be its selling value.

Mr. WINGFIELD-DIGBY said, he perfectly understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but what he wished to express was the selling value would be put down to the extent of that charge that would be placed on the land, and therefore it would not be much consolation to the owners of land to be told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the rates, &c., were a charge on the land. He should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question on one particular point, and that was with reference to the case of a jointure. In the case of a jointure where the Succession Duty had been paid by the jointure holder on the old tables, when that jointure fell in to the owner or tenant for life, would he have to pay on the capital value or only on his life interests? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would presently kindly inform the Committee. It was obvious a person might have been in possession of the property, but might not succeed to the jointure until he became an old man and until within a few years of his death, and he thought the Committee and the country would like to know whether he would have to pay on the capital value or only on his life interest? From a Parliamentary Paper issued by the Chancellor of the Exchequer he found that the value of property was to be determined by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, subject to an appeal to the High Court. Though he was not a lawyer he would submit it was a well-known axiom that a man might not be a judge in his own cause. It was obvious it would be to the interest of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to obtain as much as they could, and that would be the case of a man being a judge in his own cause. As to the competency of some of the gentlemen at Somerset House he would like to mention to the Committee a case that came to his notice the other day. A case was sent up for Probate and Succession Duty, and in the deductions there was a claim for the tithe averages. The gentleman from Somerset House sent back to ask what tithe averages were, and a considerable amount of time and correspondence was wasted in explaining to this person what tithe averages were; therefore, he asked if these gentlemen were competent to value a very large agricultural estate? But, after all, as this was a matter that concerned them, what did this proposed tax mean? He ventured to submit it meant a total ignoring of the agricultural depression and the agricultural interest, which was, perhaps, the greatest separate interest in the country. He knew they were told that the deduction on the Income Tax of the working expenses was some set-off, and in mentioning that he would like to say that that deduction was the admission of a very great principle, because up to now he believed he was right in stating the agricultural industry was the only industry that had had to pay Income Tax on its gross income and not on its profits. He did not believe that any other industry in the country was called upon to pay on its gross proceeds. He thought, however, the admission of this principle was important, even though only 10 per cent. was taken as the cost of working the estate. And here he would like to corroborate the statement of the Member for the London University (Sir J. Lubbock), when he said that 10 per cent. did not represent the expense of the working of an estate. He thought the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would affect most injuriously the owners of small freeholds, and on large estates they would operate to throw the labourers out of employment, with the result that those thus thrown out of employment would flock even more than was the case now to the large towns, and still further aggravate the great question of the unemployed.

*LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said, that the last speaker had informed the Committee that he had no expectations whatever. He (Lord Willoughby de Eresby) had expectations, and he could safely say that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his proposals it was easy for anyone who had any expectations to make a sum and ascertain what was the amount of Succession Duty he would have to pay. He must congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the very clear way he had placed his proposals before the Committee, by which a man who was about to receive an income from personalty could readily calculate the amount of Succession Duty he would have to pay. That was to say, if he were heir to some £500,000 or £1,000,000 a year he would take the graduated duties, and would be perfectly able to tell what he would have to pay as Succession Duty for two or three years, and up to that time he would be a pauper. But in regard to real property, the computation was rather more difficult, since it entirely depended on what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had chosen to call the marketable value of land. He entirely dissented from the mode of collecting money by Death Duties, considering, as he did, that every person and every generation ought to pay yearly the debt of the country. If a certain sum of money was to be raised in the country, that sum should be paid by everybody, but chiefly, no doubt, by the rich. He had no doubt that it was an axiom by hon. Gentlemen opposite that accumulated capital should pay a greater share of the taxation of the country, and he entirely shared that view. As to how far representation and taxation should go together was a question on which he should differ with certain hon. Gentlemen opposite. With regard to accumulated capital, it seemed to him that a man should pay on the income he had derived from it during his lifetime. He knew he should be met with the argument that the Income Tax once raised to a certain height was easy of evasion; but, on the other hand, he considered the Succession Duty was also easy of evasion. He considered that by the tax of Succession Duty the heir was left to pay a debt which the person from whom he inherited the property ought to have paid in his lifetime. If they wished to tax the millionaire or the rich man, they should tax him during his lifetime and not wait until he was dead, and then tax the heir on the ground that the man he succeeded should have paid the amount of such duty to the country. He believed the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself in introducing his Budget said he proposed that every year should pay its own bill. On the very same principle the people who enjoyed the good things of this world during their lifetime should be made to pay, and this payment should not be left to their heirs. The accumulated capital and money of the country did not entirely consist of cash. Accumulated capital was invested in many ways, in pictures and statues, or perhaps a millionaire might take the whim of spending his money in bricks and mortar. When the unfortunate heir succeeded to the pictures, although he might know a water-colour from an oil-painting, by the proposal of the Government—and also he was sorry to say of Conservative Governments as well—he was called upon to pay Succession Duty on things he knew and cared nothing about. In the same way, if a millionaire had invested his money in building a magnificent country house, when his heir succeeded to the property the State immediately came down upon him for the Succession Duty on the value of the house, which would practically force him to sell at any price, and it would be a fortunate thing if the County Council of the county required a lunatic asylum and would, for that purpose, pay a good price for the house, which would enable him to pay off some part of the Succession Duty. There was another point in the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to which he strongly objected, and that was the proposal to place real property on the same footing as personal property. It was perfectly certain that if they taxed any industry the burden would be felt by all the classes in that industry, and he held that by increasing the taxation on real property it was absolutely felt by all classes connected with it. There was no doubt that at the present moment agriculture was one of the most depressed industries, and those who represented agricultural constituencies had come to the Government and asked for bread, but had received a stone. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in moving his Resolutions, said no doubt hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House would, in their ingenuity, invent plenty of cases in which hardship would occur over the Succession Duties. He had such a case to bring before the right hon. Gentleman. A gentleman had allowed him to look to the actual state of his property, and in quoting his case he should be able to show the Committee that the present tax which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to impose in the form of Death Duties would be a most unfair tax, not only on the gentleman who succeeded to the estate, but also on every other person who was living or working upon the estate. He would take for his example an estate which was a purely agricultural one, and he should particularly like to call the attention of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean to the illustration. That right hon. Gentleman had said that it would be almost impossible to find an estate which had not some dealing with a town or town property, or which, owing to its proximity to a town, could not find an easy market for its goods. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that the case he was going to quote was a case which he seemed to consider so difficult to be found. There was a great quantity of land in this country which was not in the least increased in value on account of its proximity to town. The estate of which he was speaking was situated in the Eastern Counties, and so far from finding an easy market for their goods, it cost considerably more to take a quarter of wheat from that part of the country to the manufacturing districts of Liverpool and Manchester than it did to convey a quarter of wheat from abroad to those places. The property was purely agricultural, and if they examined into the books they might, no doubt, find that the rent-roll of the property amounted to £60,000 a year—a handsome rent-roll, no doubt. On that there was a mortgage of £300,000. Taking these figures, it would be found that the Succession Duty would be £96,000. The actual receipts from that estate, after paying all outgoings, were £15,000, but from that they would have to deduct £9,000, the interest on mortgage, leaving the owner with the more modest income of £6,000. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer propose to do in that case? He proposed to come down on the owner for £96,000 Succession Duty. It would take 16 years for the gentleman who succeeded to that estate before the Succession Duty could be paid off, and during that period the heir to this princely estate would be an absolute pauper. This was not the worst of the Government proposals. They seemed to impose terms on the agricultural interest even worse than the terms proposed by Shylock, for Shylock demanded his pound of flesh, but was not allowed to draw the blood. The proposals of the Government were that they were to have the pound of flesh and draw the blood as well. They were to draw the money and the Succession Duty, and then after that, though it was an absolute impossibility to pay off the Succession Duty, they would draw blood in the shape of interest out of the wretched proprietor by charging on the amount that could not be paid in the proper time. It might be urged that this income of £6,000 might be increased. So it might, but how? By stopping all buildings and all improvements, and by increasing the rent for labourers' cottages. The end would be that the landlord would be placed in the position of a tax-collector for the Government. It would be his duty to see how much he could screw out of the tenants and the labourers, and then, if he had done his duty well, if he had given satisfaction, when he reached tottering old age he would be able to screw something out of them for himself. He considered that these were most infamous proposals. It might be argued that it was unnecessary for landlords to put this amount of capital in the land. On the estate to which he had referred during the last 20 years nearly £500,000 had been spent on what was called permanent improvements. In the case of permanent improvements the landlord naturally expected that he would be gradually increasing the value of his property. But what did they find? In these 20 years the net receipts had fallen exactly one-half, and he should like to ask hon. Gentlemen opposite in what condition the land on that estate would be at the present moment if there had been no money put into it? It was impossible to cultivate clay land and produce corn crops unless an enormous amount of capital had been spent on such land. It would take three horses to plough it, and it was no use to go and scratch at it with a donkey and harrow. He was prepared to be met with the argument that it was perfectly easy to pay off the Succession Duty by mortgaging the property and borrowing money for this purpose. He was entirely against that course. Considering how hard it was on agricultural land to make any profits at all, it would be one of the worst things that could possibly be done to create a fresh mortgage in the land. The moment they created fresh mortgages so far would that estate be in a much worse position. He asked hon. Gentlemen who had experience of the county to go round and look for themselves. They would find that on the estate which was placed in the hands of the mortgagees every man, woman, and child was a great deal worse off than where the property was managed by a landlord. He was prepared to face the whole question of these Death Duties, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept some really just principle of taxation he should not say a word against the principle of graduated Death Duties. He thought that one principle of graduated Death Duties was that the accumulated capital of the country should be more widely spread and large estates broken up. But from what he could make out from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals he did not intend to bring that about, because if a man died worth £1,000,000 and left it divided among six or seven children they would have to pay 8 per cent. as Succession Duty on the share of money received, so from that point of view he did not quite see that it was the object of the Government to create a wider diffusion of money. What he should like to have some definite information upon was as to how the question of the marketable value of land and real property was to be determined. There was no doubt that when a man inherited a property he would be quite willing to pay Succession Duty on his house, and the amenities he would receive from having a country residence and enjoying the amenities of country life. He was unfortunately heir-apparent to a ghost, which was among the heirlooms, and he did not know whether that would be included in the Succession Duty. Take the case of the estate he had mentioned where £6,000 was the amount which practically went into the pockets of the owner. He raised no objection to that £6,000 being capitalised and taxed for Succession Duty, which at 4 per cent. would amount to £150,000, but the moment they began to tax the gross or the net rental of the land they would be taxing not the rich man, but the tenant and the labourer on the estate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had tried to quiet their fears on this subject by saying the market value of the estate would be taken. He had no objection to the amount a landlord placed in his pocket being capitalised, and his being charged Succession Duty on that amount, but what had been the treatment the agricultural interest had received for years and years? Take the estate he had mentioned. Instead of paying Income Tax on £6,000 the landlord had actually paid on £40,000 a year, and they had no assurance that the Government would not come down on the heirs to landed estates and charge them at the same rate that they had charged for the Income Tax? The moment they began taxing beyond what the landlord himself put in his pocket, then most assuredly that taxation must fall upon the tenant-farmer and every labourer on the estate, and they ought to have some assurance that the labourers and tenant-farmers should not have to pay the penalty of this tax.

*MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) would like to say a few words on the Resolution from a business point of view. The re-modelling of the Death Duties was, to his mind, the most important and praiseworthy feature in this very satisfactory Budget, especially because these proposals embodied a marked principle of graduated taxation. The past week had afforded him opportunities for consideration and inquiry outside this House, and the result of his inquiry in his constituency and the City of London had been to find that the prevailing opinion was greatly in favour of this Budget, and he had been astonished to hear in the City of London, even from gentlemen who were opposed to him in politics, very favourable expressions with regard to the Death Duties. The question had been raised as to the valuation of landed property. He presumed there would be no difficulty respecting freehold house property. That would be valued as easily, or perhaps easier, than leaseholds. For he knew leaseholds that would puzzle a valuer, because when they approached the expiration of the term of the ground lease their value would depend mainly upon the chances and advantages of renewal. A question had been asked the previous day in reference to estates mortgaged up to, or very near to, their full value in the market. But when property was mortgaged up to its full value the new proposals would not apply at all, and, in fact, the owner would derive a benefit from the reduction of taxation. Valuations for Probate were, in his experience, generally far beneath marketable value, and the case of estates heavily mortgaged would, no doubt, be favourably considered by the Government, in the same way as now Government accepted valuations, leaving a considerable margin. Suppose the estate to be valued, say, at £50,000, and there were mortgages to that extent on the property, naturally the Death Duties would not apply at all in such a case. If mortgaged to the extent of £40,000, the Estate Duty would only be on £10,000, amounting to £400 payable in eight years by instalments. Where, then, was the grievance? By the proposed changes taxation would not be materially increased, but would be much more justly spread. The equalisation of taxes on realty and personalty had been demanded for many years. If we were starting afresh in the putting on of Death Duties no one would seriously advocate the imposing of higher taxation on leaseholds which were terminable than on freeholds. We might as well tax Terminable Annuities more than Permanent Annuities. The Estate Duty was analogous to a progressive Income Tax, but it was in a much better form. If a man came into an estate of £500,000, producing £15,000 a year, that income would be reduced by Estate and Legacy Duties to £13,500, which was equal to a special Income Tax of 2s. in the £1, but collected in a much wiser form. As an ordinary Income Tax it would perpetuate the injustice of taxing professional income in the same way as income derived from realised property. In the case of a professional man with a large income his accumulations would be taxed with Estate Duty payable by his descendants. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was right in considering that the estimate of the yield of these duties was difficult to fix, and in regarding the change as experimental. From what he gathered from the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman this Estate Duty could not be evaded by investing money in personal property abroad. He was glad that such a system of evasion would be stopped, for he knew of cases in which the present Death Duties had been thus largely avoided. But he understood from his right hon. Friend that this alteration would not affect investments abroad in real estate. That puzzled him—as he was not a lawyer. No doubt the Estate Duty would be to some extent evaded by gifts during lifetime, especially by gifts instead of legacies to charities, and that would be a saving to the charities; while distribution by private gifts would in itself be a beneficial diffusion of wealth. But it would be only for a year or so that the idea of evading the duty would prevail, for, after all, people were disinclined to give away property in their lifetime. He did not see why the property deposited here by foreigners should not be taxed. There were large amounts sent to this country for safe custody by Foreign Potentates, and it ought to be taxed for our naval defence, which contributed to the security of this property. If the change clashed to some extent with entail and settlement, those were systems that ought to be modified or abolished. Large accumulations of property in a few hands contributed less than the diffusion of wealth to the solidity of the State. He hoped that next year the Chancellor of the Exchequor would undertake the simplification and equalisation of other taxes, such as stamps, to the inequality of which he had previously called attention. In any case the right hon. Gentleman had taken a great and progressive step towards placing the burdens of taxation where they would cause the least suffering.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY (Buteshire) said, the Debate had got into matters of mere detail, and rather far afield from the questions of more general interest with which it had dealt at an earlier stage. Before, however, he entered on these questions he wished to pay a tribute to the racy and interesting speech of the hon. Member for the Horncastle Division. He thought there was a great deal of cogency and common sense in the argument his hon. Friend had urged that every generation should bear its own burdens; but it was, perhaps, rather late for them to speak of carrying out that principle in the matter of the Succession Duties. He supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer would say that since the time of Lazarus and Dives there had been a certain amount of authority for deferred payment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked for the alteration of the Succession Duties in the name of equality and justice; and the last speaker repeated the long-extant cry for the equalisation of taxes upon real and personal property. The question was: Did these proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer really involve equality of taxation? The argument from the Opposition side of the House sought to show that land was taxed for truly Imperial purposes under many names, and that the present Death Duty was putting an additional burden on a particular form of capital which was ill able to bear it, and putting it so heavily that it would be impossible in many instances to bear it. The Secretary for India, arguing against it, gave them some interesting figures, in which he sought to prove, first, that, as a matter of fact, the total burdens per £1 on land at the present day were not so heavy as they were in a bygone time; and, in the second place, the right hon. Gentleman sought to show that many of these burdens were hereditary burdens, which had existed for a long time, and had been taken into consideration upon the land changing hands. He thought that the question of merely pointing to the amount of rates per £1 at the present moment as compared with former years had absolutely nothing to do with the question they were arguing, which was, he took it, that it being necessary for the exigencies of the country to provide additional money, should that money be borne exclusively by land or should personal property take its share? For simplicity's sake, let him suppose the only burden on land was the poor rate. They might be able to point to a time when that rate was exceptionally high, and was greater than it was now. What had that to do with the question? Take it another way. Supposing this deficit were proposed to be met by the Income Tax alone, and the Income Taxpayer said that was not fair, but that indirect taxation should bear its share, would it be a fair argument to say that at the time of Pitt the Income Tax was 10s. in the £1, while now it was only 8d., and that, therefore, additional taxation must be raised exclusively by increasing the Income Tax until it was raised to the old amount? The second point of the right hon. Gentleman was that these burdens were, so to speak, hereditary. This being an Imperial measure, it was not out of place for him to introduce Scottish procedure. The right hon.

Gentleman's statement, so far as Scotland was concerned, could not be substantiated. The greatest burden falling on land in Scotland was the poor rate. Historically speaking, it was a rate which was not imposed on land, but according to means and substance. But landlords were principally caught. The present system by which the poor rate was principally put on land dated only from 1845. The great burden of modern education rates dated from the Act of 1872, and the next great burden was the Roads and Bridges Act of 1878. But even these were comparatively modern. Then there were Registration, Free Libraries, Contagious Diseases Acts, and Vaccination—all perfectly modern rates, which did not come under hereditary burdens at all, upon which the argument of the Secretary for India was based. While he admired the ingenuity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there was a fallacy in his argument. He said it was not necessary to talk about all these various burdens, to which he admitted that land was subjected, because the Death Duty he was putting on was calculated on the capital value, and he did not estimate the capital value until he deducted the various taxes which were imposed upon the land. That position, however, was unsound, because the right hon. Gentleman treated the two things as if they were mutually exclusive, whereas they were not so. Suppose the case of a landed estate which brought in £1,000 a year, and was estimated as worth £30,000, and that the rates which pressed upon land alone were 2s. in the £1. That would give an assessment of £100 a year. That reduced the rental to £900 a year, which, calculated on 30 years' purchase, was £27,000—the capital value on which the right hon. Gentleman's Succession Duty would be calculated. The right hon. Gentleman said they had discounted the whole of the burdens which the land paid; but he forgot that they were not paid on the £3,000 that were taken off, but on the whole £27,000. The right hon. Gentleman confused the assessment put upon yearly value and the calculated capitalised value. The right hon. Gentleman said the owners of real property could never complain of anything they had to bear in the way of exclusive burden if the particular tax that he put upon them was calculated upon the yearly value after that exclusive burden was deducted.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Not on the yearly value.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY said, the only way capital value could be calculated was by taking so many years' purchase of the annual value. The right hon. Gentleman had given them one sporting allusion this evening, and he would offer another. He would offer a "swop," and say that if his argument was good as respected the land, let him put the Succession Duty on personalty after deducting the yearly value in the same way as he proposed for land. He would leave it to the Committee to judge whether the argument would be a sound one.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I accept it.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY said, that the right hon. Gentleman accepted it. Well, let him put it another way. Suppose a foreign admirer of English statesmen left £20,000 to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—it was £20,000 that had never been in this country before, and he invested it half in land and half in personal property—did the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that he would get as much return from the £10,000 he invested in land as from the £10,000 he invested in personal property, and, if not, why? It would be largely because the burdens on real property under his scheme would be greater than the burdens on personal property. Yet the right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that there would be no greater stress on the one than on the other, because they were only to calculate it on the capital value of these properties. The right hon. Gentleman had given the whole subject the go-by by that argument, and no one supporting his proposals had dealt with the question of the pressure of taxation, for what were Imperial purposes, upon the landed interest, and had contended that it was just and equitable to put this great extra burden upon it. But the objections to the proposal did not end there. There were objections to the peculiar incidence of the tax. There was a great and inherent difference between personalty and real property.

Personal property could always be sold in bits, and therefore there was no difficulty in realisation. But real property could not be treated in that way; in many cases its value would be destroyed if it was broken up. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed that these new taxes should be met by the landed proprietors by mortgages; and it was curious to observe that this was the first Government which had proposed mortgages as a means of meeting taxation. Money could not be raised on second mortgage on land except at ruinous interest, and the result would be that the State must either go without the duty or force a sale. Many Members thought it would be a good thing to break up estates in this country. He wondered if they ever thought how greatly the landlords in this country had been a buffer between the poor people and absolute want. In view of the great fall in prices, it would have been perfectly impossible to maintain the wages paid to the labourers but for the buffer of the landlord, and if the present landlord system was broken up the real deadliness of the blow would strike the people whom hon. Gentlemen opposite professed to befriend. He now wished to refer to one or two small matters. He understood from what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that there was to be no particular method or tribunal for valuing. He, with considerable experience, thought that a great misfortune. He believed that it would be a premium on dishonesty. It was all very well to say the State was easy in this matter. He had no objection to that attitude if there were always one valuer. But practically it was found that one subject was treated very differently as compared with another subject, these things being valued in different parts of the country on a completely different scale. In the case of the valuation of the bulk of personal property there was a practical protection in the Stock Exchange list; but if the Government did not set up some proper tribunal when they had to deal with the valuation of real property, it would be really a premium upon dishonesty. As it was, it was a difficult thing to value real property. There was really almost no limit to the divergence of honest opinion. What was the valuation of Devonshire House, supposing they chose to break it up?

Sir W. HARCOURT said, that leaseholds were valued every day in London, and all over the country, for Probate Duty.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY: Oh, but what about freeholds? They knew what a leasehold was bringing in, but in a great many of the other cases they had no knowledge of what the property was bringing in. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would think about this as a practical matter, because if he did not he would certainly open the door to a great deal of cheating. In Scotland leaseholds were real property, and the result of the right hon. Gentleman's proposal would be that for the first time the agricultural tenant in Scotland would be taxed upon the succession of his lease. That, of course, was a direct burden on the agricultural industry. It was a direct burden on the tenant-farmer, say, of a 19 years' lease, with 17 years to run. He had never had to bear that burden before. He (Mr. Graham Murray) wanted to know how the right hon. Gentleman was facing a fact like that? It had also to be borne in mind that the proposals as to the payment of 1 per cent. upon settlement were utterly inapplicable to the system of Scottish law. In Scotland they had no system of remainders. The estate went down from one person to another by a sort of conduit pipe which was called a destination. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would give some assurance that there should be clauses in the Bill by which a proprietor in Scotland in the settlement of his estate would not be put in any inferior position to his brother in England.

Mr. WARNER (Somerset, N.) said, he desired to say a word or two, not as an advocate of the landlords, but rather as an advocate of the agricultural industry. It was a curious fact with regard to this taxation, which everybody had overlooked, that only £1,000,000 out of the total annual sum of nearly £4,000,000 would be received in the first year. Therefore, only one-third of the increased taxation would be felt by the landlords in the first year.

Sir W. HARCOURT: None at all.

Mr. WARNER said, that some of it might come in after the first six months. Anyhow it was not due until the expiration of the first six months after death. None of the money need be paid during the first year, but if the taxpayers did not want to pay interest the duty might be paid after the first six months. Only a portion, therefore, would come out of the land during the first year, and yet the whole of the relief given by the Budget would be got during the first year. Instead of being £300,000 to the bad, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out, the landed interest would be something to the good; and though it was only for the first year, he hoped that in his next Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to extend some further consideration to the landed interest, especially as he would then have the prospect of a larger sum from the Death Duties. Still, he was more concerned with the agricultural interest than with the landed interest, and under the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals the farmer would get relief in a way that no one had noticed. The vast majority of farmers of this country were men who paid Income Tax on incomes of between £150 and £500 a year, and every one of these would derive benefit from the new scale of Income Tax. The man who had between £150 and £160 a year would pay no Income Tax, and the man with less than £400 would be let off £160 of the amount, while the man who had between £400 and £500 would have his advantage. Nearly every farmer would benefit, and, indirectly, even the landlords would get some relief in finding their tenants less pressed by taxation than they had been in the past. The statement of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol as to ground-rents was most extraordinary. The right hon. Gentleman had said that in some cases a ground-rent of 1s. a year was paid on houses worth £300 apiece. Well, he (Mr. Warner) had built many houses of the value of £300, and the ground-rent on those had been between £3 and £5. He could not understand a shilling ground-rent except in the same way that there were such things as peppercorn rents on agricultural land. And a more extraordinary statement still which had fallen from the right hon. Baronet was that working men invested in these ground-rents. He himself had sold ground-rents to working men's Societies, but no working man invested in houses costing £300 apiece to bring in 1s. a year——

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Nobody said he did.

Mr. WARNER said, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol had implied that.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH said, he had mentioned a particular case, and had then gone on to refer to ground-rents generally in which working men had an interest.

Mr. WARNER said, he had understood the right hon. Baronet to imply that working men would invest in such ground-rents as these. A large number of persons objected to the present incidence of the Income Tax in that the man who earned £500 a year had to pay at the same rate as a man who was taxed on a capital of £12,000 a year. But the Death Duties remedied this apparent injustice, because they fell entirely on capital, and the man who earned his income was exempted. He hoped that when another Budget had to be drawn something would be done to put the English and the Scotch farmer on more equal terms. At any rate, something should be done to lighten the incidence of taxation on the agricultural interest, though he was bound to admit that, so far as they had gone, that interest was treated better in this Budget than it had been for many years past.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) said, the hon. Member opposite said he was glad the farmers had received an abatement on the Income Tax on account of small incomes. He might have gone farther, and have said that last year and this year their incomes were reduced to nothing, and that, therefore, they had no Income Tax at all to pay. His (Mr. Jeffreys') objection to the increased Death Duties was because it laid another burden upon land, and because land, as had been shown by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford and others, was now suffering under such great depression that it could not bear any extra pressure of taxation. His objection to the graduated duties was the same as was put by the right hon. Member for

St. George's, Hanover Square—that there did not appear to be any fixed limit to the scale, and he feared that in future years when any needy Chancellor of the Exchequer wanted money he would be tempted to raise the scale and limit. He should like to put a case to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in reference to those duties, which he thought very hard. He would suppose the case of a man who left property valued at £101,000, and that that property was divided among his six children, the eldest son getting £51,000 and each of the other children £10,000. On account of the property being over £100,000 in value the Death Duties would be 6 per cent., and, according to the new scale, each of the children who received £10,000 would have to pay that 6 per cent. on his small share. Let them contrast that with the case of the only son of a man who died worth £10,000; in this case the son would have to pay only 3 per cent. on the £10,000, or £300 instead of £600 in the other case. That was a gross inequality. He would put it to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this tax should only fall upon the man who succeeded to a large property. If there was to be a graduated tax at all it should fall on the man who inherited the £101,000 altogether. When the property was divided into small estates those who received them surely ought to pay a lower rate of duty. Then in the case of real estate, a mortgage would have to be effected in order that the duty might be paid, and this would entail costly expenditure in surveyors' fees, solicitors' costs, and stamps. In preparing a mortgage on the estate of £101,000 there would be a charge of £260 for the surveyor's fee and Stamp Duty, and other charges would amount to £240, so that preparing the mortgage would cost £500, or a half per cent. The possessor of the real estate would, first of all, have great difficulty in raising the money, and then would have 6½ per cent. to pay in the shape of Death Duty. On the other hand, if a man had to realise £6,000 of personal property in Consols he would only have to pay £7 10. He thought this a very hard case, and he trusted the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would do something even now to reduce the graduated scale of taxation in respect of real property as compared with personal property. Another matter he wished to refer to was the subject of votes upon real property. He had listened very attentively to what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Local Government Board, and he quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that in some instances the rates were lower than they were in former days. But he should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman of this—that although in some counties the rateable value had increased, the value of the agricultural land had diminished, the increase of rateable value being due to the new houses built in the whole rateable area. It was not so much to the actual rate in the £1 that people occupying land in agricultural districts objected as to the way in which the rate was levied. A farmer with 500 acres of land had to pay in respect of every acre, in short upon his whole stock in trade. It was as if a shopkeeper were asked to pay rates not only on his house but on his goods in the shop, or as if a banker were made to pay not only in respect of the bank premises, but in respect of all the bullion in his cellars. The farmer who had to pay rates not only on his house but also on his land was put to a disadvantage as compared with the professional man in the next village who paid only on his house. In assessing the Death Duties all these circumstances ought to be taken into consideration. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider this matter, because he had already stated that he had considered the position of the farmers, and would do what he could to equalise the taxes imposed upon English farmers and those imposed upon Scotch and Irish farmers. Seeing that the right hon. Gentleman had this feeling for the occupiers of land, he hoped he would extend it to the owners. If he must increase their burdens let him do it with a light hand—if it were necessary to have this graduated scale at all, let him graduate it a little more.

*Mr. BUTCHER (York) said, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that in considering this question of the Death

Duties it was immaterial to consider what charges there were now upon the land. That was his position, and his reason was that the purchaser would take these local rates into account in the price paid for the land. If it was immaterial to consider what were the local rates already charged on the land, might he ask why the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton compared these rates with the rates as they existed in previous times? If that was irrelevant, he could not understand why the Chancellor of the Exchequer allowed the right hon. Gentleman to proceed with his speech upon that point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing the Budget referred to the Resolution proposed in 1888 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian. The terms of that Resolution, for which he presumed the Chancellor of the Exchequer voted, were in effect that the Death Duties were not to be equalised until Parliament had made arrangements for the equalisation of local rates. Therefore, this question of local rates was of the very essence of the question, and Parliament had to consider whether equitable provision had been made for the adjustment of the local rates before proceeding to deal with the equalisation of the Death Duties. That was clear both from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton and from the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian. The reason that was given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his proposition was a remarkable one. He said, "You need not consider the justice of these rates, because they have been already considered by the purchaser in arriving at a conclusion as to how much money he should pay for the land." That argument was adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton also, but he ventured to say it was a fallacious test as to whether a particular rate was or was not a fair charge upon the land. These rates were fair, it was said, because you had considered them in fixing the purchase money of the land. He did not say that argument was correct, but if it was correct he said the new duty was unfair, because the purchaser could not possibly have taken it into consideration when fixing the purchase money for the land. There was another feature in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer which had occurred to him. It was the question of how these new duties would press upon small holders of land. His hon. Friend the Member for the Thirsk Division had called attention to the fact that these small properties under the new duties would have to pay more than before, and he added that this was a strange proceeding on the part of those who professed a desire to increase the small ownership of land. He knew that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that in the case of small properties there would be a decrease, but his own contention was that the duties would be larger. Although it was true that the new rate on these small properties was less than it was before, yet, owing to the mode of assessment, the amount would actually be larger than before. That would be the case in respect of properties between £100 and £500, and it was more the case in respect of properties between £500 and £1,000. Between £100 and £500 the increase would be half as much again as at present in the case of lineal successions. In other words, the proportion of the old duty to the new would be as 66 is to 100. As regarded properties between £500 and £1,000, the new duty would be about three times as much—in the proportion of 100 to 33. The mode he adopted was to take 3 per cent. upon the capital value of the land as representing the fair net rental of the land, to take the successor's age at 40, to capitalise that rental, then to find the amount of the duties payable at present and the amount payable under the new proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But supposing it was said that was not a fair method, and that he ought to take 4 per cent., still he said that these duties would be greater under the new than the old scale—12 per cent. and 50 per cent. more respectively. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that this was a very serious matter for a great number of small holders of land in this country. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, in 1874, there were no less than 54,000 holders of land under an acre, and if he was right everyone of these proprietors would have to pay more under the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. In Gloucestershire also there was a vast number of small holdings, and he asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that these taxes should not press so heavily upon this large and deserving class of small holders of land. He would now turn to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. He gave the Committee a large number of figures which showed that on the whole the local burdens had decreased. But he (Mr. Butcher) asked the Committee to note that the comparison he made was between the rates as they stood and the rates as they existed in 1868. That comparison was of no use whatever. What they wanted to know was how matters stood in 1853, because the proposal at present was that they should repeal the settlement of 1853. What was the position then? The circumstances were considered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in that year, and when they were asked to alter the settlement come to in 1853, and to impose additional burdens on land which the right hon. Gentleman thought were unreasonable in 1853, he thought they might fairly ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what had happened since that year that made it equitable to impose burdens on land now that were held not to be reasonable then. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton had told them that the rates had gone down on land since 1868, but what he would like to know was if the rates had gone up or down since 1853. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Thirsk gave figures which were not impugned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. He said that in 1851 the local rates upon land were 2s. 6d., and at the present time the local rates were 3s. 7d. in the £1, and he very fairly asked the Committee to say if the rates had gone up since 1853, why should they propose an additional duty upon land now? That was a very important matter for consideration, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton would clear it up himself, and show how these local rates stood in the year when the last settlement was arrived at, which they were now asked to undo. There was one matter in regard to which he thought personalty was unduly favoured. As he understood it, in all cases of settlement, whether of personalty or realty, the new Estate Duty covered the Succession Duty payable by lineals. That being so, it was very material to consider how often the new Estate Duty would be payable—in other words, what was the average duration of life of a settlement? Taking the case of an ordinary marriage settlement of personalty, he thought he was right in saying that such a settlement lasted very much longer than a settlement of realty. As a rule, it would last from 40 to 50 years. But how did it stand with regard to realty? Taking the custom and the practice he thought that with regard to realty he was right in saying that there was a re-settlement upon each tenant-in-tail coming of age; in other words, the period of duration of realty settlements would be from 25 to 30 years. If he was right in these figures this result followed—that in the case of a settlement of personalty the duration was from 40 to 50 years, and the Estate Duty on personalty was payable once in 40 or 50 years, whereas in the case of realty the duration was about 30 years, and the duty became payable about every 30 years. How would this new duty affect small settlements both in reference to personalty and realty? The large properties would take care of themselves, and he did not believe that they would be unfairly taxed; but it was with regard to small properties which were affected by these duties, and which were held by the professional and middle classes, that he was now addressing the Committee — he meant settlements of from £1,000 to £10,000. Taking the ordinary form of settlement, he found, under the old system as compared with the new, that the new system absolutely doubled the duty on the small settlements of the amounts he had named. Had the Chancellor of the Exchequer considered whether it would be for the advantage of the community to tax these small settlements with this large duty? He knew some hon. Members would like to upset the principle of settlement altogether. His opinion was that so far as these small owners were concerned the principle of settlement was a most excellent one, and ought to be encouraged by every means in their power, because it was the outcome of economy and prudence. When the Chancellor of the

Exchequer came here and placed this large duty on small settlements he struck a blow at the economy and prudence of these small holders who formed a class which he ought to be the first to encourage.

SIR W. HARCOURT appealed to the Committee to allow the Resolution now to pass in order that the Bill might be introduced. The measure was being looked forward to with great interest, and he reminded hon. Members who wished to speak that there would be opportunities for further discussion on the Second Reading stage as well as on the details in Committee.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, he thought that there was a certain degree of force in the appeal which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman. It would be convenient that hon. Members should see the Bill in print. He was disposed to think that the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman might be wisely accepted, since the right hon. Gentleman had promised to give full opportunity on the Second Reading of the Bill to deal with the whole matter. He hoped that a reasonable time would be allowed to elapse between this preliminary discussion and the later stages.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 17th instant, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

CONCILIATION (TRADE DISPUTES) BILL.—(No. 125.)

SECOND READING [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [23rd April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BURT, Morpeth) said, he must appeal to the House to allow this Bill to be read a second time. He thought there was general agreement with regard to its principle.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he was surprised that the hon. Gentleman should wish the House to read a Bill of this importance a second time without affording a proper opportunity for a Second Reading discussion. Because the Bill issued from a Government Department, and was to be sent to a Grand Committee, it seemed to be supposed that it could be entirely taken out of the hands of the House. He failed to see within the four corners of the Bill how it was to advance the settlement of labour disputes. By the first clause the Board of Trade was enabled to inquire into differences between employers and employed, and the second clause empowered the Board of Trade to appoint conciliators or a Board of Conciliation. He could not for the life of him understand why these things could not be done by the Board of Trade without the necessity of bringing in this Bill at all. Then, again, the Board of Trade could appoint a person to whom disputes could be referred without a Bill of this sort. What was the Board of Trade for if it could not do simple work of this kind?

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be resumed upon Thursday."

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) said, he was anxious to address the House upon this Bill, both as having been President of the Board of Trade and as a Member of the Labour Commission. His right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge University (Sir J. Gorst) also took an interest in the measure. It was absolutely impossible to go into the subject if the Bill was brought forward at such an hour as this. He wanted to know whether, if the Government intended to go on with the Bill, they would give the House an opportunity of discussing it at a reasonable time?

Motion agreed to.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

QUARTER SESSIONS BILL [*Lords*].
(No. 162.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) asked if the Solicitor General, or he should more properly say the Attorney General, between this stage and going into Committee on the Bill, would consider the point whether the dates of holding Quarter Sessions should not be fixed by Quarter Sessions instead of by the Committee? He had looked at the Assizes Relief Act, and he was not sure whether it would be wise to leave the fixing of the dates to the Committee.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir J. Rigby, Forfar) said, he would consider the matter.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) said, that as this Bill had been introduced in the Lords he should like to have some information about it. Although the two Front Benches might be in agreement that was no reason why the Bill should be allowed to pass without an explanation being given. Any Bill coming from the Lords ought to be explained here.

Sir J. RIGBY said, that under existing circumstances two Justices appointed at the Epiphany Sessions could vary the time of the holding of Quarter Sessions. It had been found, however, that that permission was not enough for all practical purposes, and it was proposed to extend the limit so as to allow a change of 14 days, in order that the Quarter Sessions might be held without interference with the Assizes.

Dr. TANNER said, he should read the Bill carefully, and if necessary object upon another occasion.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

BUILDING SOCIETIES (No. 2) BILL.
(No. 157.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading, read.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. H. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) said, the measure was the outcome of the unanimous Report of the Committee, and he hoped the House would allow it to be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. H. Gladstone.*)

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) said, he understood there was some opposition to this Bill coming from some of the best of the Societies.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, there was no doubt some opposition to this Bill, but he thought if the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Conybeare) had heard the evidence upstairs he would change his mind as to such opposition coming from the best Societies.

Sir R. WEBSTER said, he had received a communication from some Building Societies objecting to some changes in the Bill which were important to them. He thought that a Bill was going to be prepared and introduced which would raise the question, and if such a Bill were introduced he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see that it went to the Committee along with the present measure.

***Mr. H. GLADSTONE** said, a Bill introduced last Session by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University (Sir J. Lubbock) really represented the views of the Building Societies, and had been fully considered by the Select Committee. But the Government had no objection to the Bill referred to by the hon. Gentleman going to the Standing Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure.

RELIGIOUS TESTS (IRELAND) BILL.
(No. 48.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. P. A. M'Hugh.*)

***Mr. W. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.) objected. This Bill, so industriously championed by the hon. Member for North Leitrim, opened up for him the way to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.

Second Reading deferred till To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 5) BILL. (No. 165.)

Read a second time, and committed.

WEMYSS, &c., WATER PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 158.)

Read a second time, and committed.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 147.)

Reported without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Statute Law Revision Bills, &c.—That they have added a Lord to the Joint Committee appointed by both Houses on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill; and request this House to add one of its Members to the said Joint Committee for the consideration of the said Bill.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. James Stevenson, Bill to prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, ordered to be brought in by Mr. James Stevenson, Mr. Perks, Mr. Charles Wilson, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. Snape, and Mr. Woods.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 186.]

PROCEDURE OF PARLIAMENT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Labouchere, Bill to amend the Procedure of Parliament in case of disagreement between the Houses, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Labouchere, Mr. John Ellis, and Mr. William Allen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 187.]

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles Cameron, Bill to put an end to the establishment of the Church of Scotland and to deal with the public endowments thereof on the occurrence of vacancies, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Cameron, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Beith, Mr. Stephen Williamson, and Mr. Dunn.

Mr. W. Johnston

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 188.]

SHOP HOURS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Provand, Bill to amend "The Shop Hours Act, 1892," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Provand, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Samuel Smith, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Rankin.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 189.]

LAND ACTS (IRELAND).

Ordered, That the Committee on Land Acts (Ireland) do consist of Seventeen Members.

Ordered, That Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Carson, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Hayes Fisher, Mr. Fuller, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. W. Kenny, Mr. Leese, Mr. Macartney, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Sexton, Colonel Waring, and Mr. Wharton be Members of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

EAST INDIA FAMINE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS.

Address for "Copies or Extracts from recent Correspondence with the Government of India on the subject of measures adopted on the Recommendations made in the Report of the Indian Famine Commission."—(*Sir William Wedderburn.*)

MARKETS AND FAIRS (WEIGHING OF CATTLE) ACT, 1887.

Return ordered, "showing the number of Fairs and Markets in respect of which orders of exemption have been made in Ireland by the authorities charged with the administration of the Act; and showing the date of the making of such orders respectively."—(*Mr. Dane.*)

REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "showing by Counties up to the 31st day of March, 1894 (1) number of cases of Compulsory Registration in which requisitions have been lodged; (2) number of cases of Voluntary Registrations in which requisitions have been lodged; (3) number of Compulsory Cases registered; and (4) number of Voluntary Cases registered."—(*Mr. Dane.*)

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 25th April 1894.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—(No. 10.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles), in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, said it was peculiar in this respect—that while some who usually agreed with him would vote against it, on the other hand it would have the support of some hon. Gentlemen who sat opposite. The right hon. Member for Midlothian, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, and the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had voted in favour of the principle, showing clearly that it was in no respects a Party measure. In his own particular case he had a proof of that. At his first election, when he was reproached for adopting this view, and was reviled by some of his opponents on that account, the hon. and gallant Member for Bolton came to his assistance and preached the same doctrine. At the last Election, in 1892, his opponent professed that his mind was entirely open, and that he was only seeking for light. Naturally, seeking for light he went down into a coal pit, and when he came up was entirely convinced in favour of this Bill. The Bill proposed to limit the hours of labour underground to eight hours—from leaving the surface till coming back to the surface. The question had been growing in public favour and in favour in that House. In 1892 the majority against it was 112; in 1893 the majority for it was 78. Nor was that the only indication of the growing favour. The hon. Member for Morpeth, speaking the other day at Newcastle, said he thought the tendency of the time was in favour of this restriction of hours, while the Miners' Federation, at Leicester, in January, again affirmed their unanimous approval of the eight hours per day. More recently they had had announced to them not exactly the same thing, it was true, but still a restriction of hours in the Government factories, and they had had the experiment by the hon. Member for Gorton in favour of the limitation of hours, though in that case it was not per day, but per week.

MR. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): By voluntary action.

MR. ROBY said, he was now stating the tendency of public opinion. He was not arguing the question whether it should to be by legislation or by voluntary arrangement. An account of what professed to be the Report of the Labour Commission had appeared in *The Times*, and this Report as published in the newspaper appeared to him to give a somewhat doubtful expression of opinion on the subject. The Report seemed to indicate that at present the members of the Commission had not made up their minds; but he did not know on what authority the Report had been published in *The Times*, or which members of the Commission were in favour of the Report. He believed, however, that he was right in saying that the evidence given before the Commission was in one respect partial. The Miners' Federation did not send representatives, and this Organisation embraced a very large number of coalminers in the country. The Federation was in favour of this Bill. The arguments for the Bill appeared to be mainly two—first, that the Bill was intended to satisfy the demands put forward for the regulation of their own trade by the great mass of the workers in that trade. He was aware that he would be met at this point by the hon. Baronet the Member for Barnard Castle, who said the previous day that there were 231,000 miners in Northumberland and Durham and the South Wales district who were opposed to the Bill. But, according to the Census, the total number of miners in Northumberland was 27,000, in Durham 80,000, and though he had not the precise figures as to the part of South Wales where there was strong opposition, he would place them at about 15,000. He believed it was put by one of the witnesses before the Labour Commission at 15,000.

SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, his figures were taken from Returns prepared by Inspectors of the number of men employed above and below the surface in Northumberland, Durham, and South Wales.

Mr. ROBY said, that the figures for the Northern Counties were 114,000, and for Monmouth and Wales 118,000, making a total of 232,000, which so nearly corresponded with the 231,000 mentioned by the hon. Baronet that he could not help thinking that the figures were derived from the same source. But those figures ought to be divided by at least one-half, and then they would obtain the number for that part of South Wales where the opposition was strongest and the number for the whole of Northumberland and Durham, where, however, it was well-known there was a considerable minority in favour of the Bill. In April, 1893, the hon. Member for Mid Durham (Mr. J. Wilson) stated that a ballot had been taken in Northumberland and Durham upon the question, and there voted in favour of the eight hours day 12,000, the number voting against it being 28,000, making a total of 40,000 voting out of a total of 60,000 or 70,000 men. It was clear, therefore, that the hon. Baronet's figures ought to be cut down first to 122,000, and out of that they must knock off the large number who might be said to be indifferent in the matter, or in favour of the proposal. It was the question of Northumberland and Durham which occasioned him the greatest difficulty when the matter was brought before him, before he had become a candidate for a seat in Parliament, and, in his opinion, it was the greatest difficulty now. In these districts there were difficulties in working; but these might be overcome if people chose to put themselves to it, and he thought that the main argument which put these districts out of court was that boys were working at least 10 hours a day in the mines there.

Mr. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid) said, that the word "working" was misapplied in that case. The boys did not work 10 hours a day, although they were down in the pit for that time.

Mr. ROBY said, he would substitute "underground" for "working"; but these boys were employed in hard work to a large extent. ["No!"] Yes. He was speaking from evidence given before the Labour Commission, and the boys were in that position in order that the coal getters might retain less hours. His second argument for the Bill was that it satisfied a large majority of a most important trade in a demand which was reasonable, practicable, and expedient for their own interest and for that of the community. Hours of labour should, as far as possible, be reduced so that those who came into the world without their own choice should have at least some enjoyment while they were in it. He did not go so far as some of the supporters of this Bill. He was not introducing a general eight hours Bill—he did not think it was practicable—but he was introducing a Bill for a particular trade, which seemed to be exceptional in the general character of its work and in the effect disturbances of it had upon the whole trade of the country. Nobody denied that the labour of miners was exhausting, and was also eminently dangerous work. He desired to lessen not only the period of hard work, but also the period of exclusion from the light of day, and of exposure to risks of death and mutilation. He was not going to have any inquisitorial inspection of the manner in which the extra leisure might be employed. He could not help thinking that those who made an objection on that ground might sometimes consider whether it would not be possible to make a better use of the leisure of those who did not work at all. He should be met with the objection that miners were shown to be healthy and also that the risk was not so great during the late as during the early hours of the shift. He did not attach much importance to the latter argument, as there were natural reasons for the greater risk at the early hours, the roof of a mine being more liable to give way after a period of rest. But as to the statement that miners were shown to be healthy, he thought some of his friends lost a chance of getting money out of exhausted mines by not making them health resorts and organising regular parties to stay there for a time in order to recruit their energies in the healthy atmosphere of a mine. He did not say that mines were proved, on the whole, less healthy than other occupations. It was said that they ought not to interfere with adult labour, and those who used that argument belonged to a school of political economy to which he was to a large extent still attached. He did not want the State to interfere more than was necessary, but it had been shown over and over again that the State could interfere in certain cases with infinite advantage, and they had no right to lay down any specific rule as to interfering only in cases of persons below a certain age. The State interfered last year in the case of railway servants. Factory legislation and the Coal Mines Acts were also cases of interference which restricted indirectly the hours of adults, and people forgot that Statute prevented all Sunday labour. If by interference he could prevent, or have a chance of preventing, disturbances of trade by strikes and secure a greater amount of comfort and safety to the working population, he would not be debarred from voting for it by the notion that they were interfering with the labour of men over the age of 21. He was quite aware that there were great differences in the cases of mines, but it was not the first time that legislation had interfered with a bold hand with a trade that had as great differences. Another objection to the Bill was that it proposed to interfere with the hours of labour by legislation instead of by agreement; but his reason for preferring legislation to agreement was because those interested could not obtain the shortening of their hours of labour by agreement, and, secondly, that the attempt to obtain it would lead to great unsettlement and continual strikes, which was what he wanted to avoid. Nor did he agree with making it a matter of local option, for trade every day was getting less local. During the late coal strike, for instance, his own firm got coals from Wales, Durham, and Scotland. The mine-owners would undoubtedly use great pressure to prevent agreements, and these would be very liable to be upset whenever times became a little bad. He did not believe that this restriction would diminish the output except for the first month or two, and wages would only be diminished where there was a diminished output. At any rate, if wages diminished, that diminution would go to reduce the cost, although he did not think that hours and wages stood in that close relation to one another which some people imagined. As to the bad results which were foreshadowed as the result of this measure if adopted, he had only to turn to history to see that these fears were unfounded. Fifty years ago Mr. John Bright, speaking of the Bill for the reduction of the hours of labour of women and children in factories to 10 hours a day, said—

> "The proposition was most injurious and destructive to the best interests of the country and contrary to the principles of sound legislation. It was a delusion practised upon the working classes; it was advocated by those who had no knowledge of the economy of manufactures, and if it became law the necessities of trade and the demands alike of the workmen and the masters would compel them to retrace their steps."

Mr. Bright contended that the Bill would result in a reduction of the output in cotton goods. Statistics showed that at the present moment two and a-half times more work was turned out than in those days. The cost was less, the hours of labour were reduced, and the wages of the people were increased. He commended this experience to hon. Gentlemen who with perfect honesty and perfect justification were opposing the Bill—perfect justification as far as their own fears went. He would not offer his hon. Friend (Sir J. Pease) an opiate, for he knew his horror of opium, but he would give him these facts as a salutary remedy for his fears and apprehensions. He did not say that there were not people in factories who would like the *employés* to work a little longer than they did now. It was quite possible that there were; but this he would say—that he did not think there was a Member in the House who would dream of reversing the factory legislation, who would dream of lengthening the hours, or who would dream in any way of going back on that legislation. No doubt the Legislature did sometimes interfere with a hand of iron, but it was a hand that gave the worker support and courage. In Lancashire the experiment of eight hours had actually been tried, and was being tried at this moment. This was at the Altham Collieries, and he had received from Mr. M'Alpine a statement with reference to the experiment. He said—

> "It must be borne in mind that the experiment has only been in operation for five weeks, and it is perhaps too soon to derive any reliable conclusions from it. On the other hand, everything seems to point to its being a success. The arrangement includes, besides the eight hours from bank to bank for the miners, a 48 hours week for all *employés* and an eight hours shift for winders. The result of this is that the cost of getting coal is slightly increased, but it is partially balanced by the fact that the machinery, &c., has to run an hour less per day, thus reducing the wear and tear and cost of maintenance. The wage earnable by the miners

seems to be reduced by about 4 per cent. Before the alteration it was 8s. 3d. per day at these collieries; since the alteration it is not more than 7s. 11d. The day-wage men seem to do as much work as previously, and no extra men are employed under this arrangement. No difficulty is experienced in getting the men to return to the bank in the same order as that in which they descended, so that each man is in the pit for exactly eight hours per day. I certainly favour the principle of an eight hours day for miners, but an exception, perhaps, ought to be made for officials. I think it necessary that officials should be excepted from the operation of the Bill, though I think care must be taken to provide against this exception being abused."

He (Mr. Roby) thought it might be necessary that the officials should be excepted from the general working of the Bill, though, of course, care must be taken to prevent the exception being abused. The firemen, also, would have to come in an hour earlier; but these were details which could be dealt with in Committee. This Bill was a reform put forward by the workers. The general progress of the country demanded it, while it was very necessary, where we could, to lessen the toil and oppressiveness of labour, particularly where there was great risk. He would, in conclusion, ask the House to remember that it was a Bill brought forward at the instance and in the interest of those who were working excluded from the light of day, and working, not only in a metaphorical but in a real and even terrible sense, in "the valley and shadow of death."

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston), in seconding the Motion that the Bill be read a second time, congratulated the supporters of the movement for shortening the hours of labour upon the remarkable success which had up to the present time attended their efforts. There appeared to be now a general agreement on all sides, even among those who were formerly their foes, that the time had arrived when the hours of labour should be shortened. As far as he could judge, the only difference now was as to the means to be employed to accomplish that end. One party was in favour of trusting to organisation, while the other desired legislative action. The advocates of organisation were a diminishing force, while the advocates of legislation were fast increasing. The old doctrine of *laissez faire* died with Lord Palmerston, who was its chief advocate, and the cold-blooded theory which regarded human beings as mere commodities was killed by household suffrage. An entirely new departure had now been taken. It might very naturally be asked why they preferred legislative action? Well, they did so because it was more speedy, more economical, and more certain in its results. It was, he contended, practically impossible to accomplish their object by means of organisation. The struggles which had been going on for reducing the hours of labour showed that organisation had been practically a failure. The struggle, so far back as 1858, in the building trades and similar attempts among the operative bakers of the Metropolis, furnished strong evidence in support of that argument; and the endeavour made on the Scotch railways, only three and a-half years ago, also tended to prove that organisation had failed to accomplish the object which was ardently desired. In 1859 70,000 building operatives in London were locked out by the master builders because they tried to reduce their hours of labour to nine per day, and it cost their fellows upwards of £100,000 to maintain them, besides the loss of about a quarter of a million in wages. The employers triumphed for a time, though some of them had to go into the Bankruptcy Court; but the struggle had been renewed from time to time during 30 years, and it was only recently, after another great lock-out, that the operatives succeeded in reducing their hours to eight per day; but what they had gained after 32 years of agitation they were in danger of losing, as so many unprincipled employers and selfish workmen were constantly trying to break through the arrangement. The operative bakers in London had for 48 years been vainly trying to abolish night work and to limit their hours to 10 per day. Yet at the present moment there were 10,000 bakers in London working 15 and 16 hours daily for five days, 21 and 22 hours on Saturday, and many of them work also on Sundays. The Scotch Railway *employés* only two years ago tried to limit their hours to 10 per day, a modest demand which failed after a desperate effort, during which trade and traffic in Scotland were paralysed. Scores of other cases might be cited in support of the argument that organisation had failed and that legislative action was required. Another of the arguments urged against the Bill was that there would be great danger from foreign competition if it were allowed to pass; but from figures furnished two or three years ago by the Secretary to the British Embassy at Rome, it appeared that in the year 1889 the total value of the product of mines in Italy, Belgium, France, and Great Britain was, per head of those employed in them, £43, £62 10s., £88, and £128 respectively. Those figures showed that the product of the British miner was £85 more than that of the Italian miner, who produced the least, and was £40 more than that of the French miner, who produced the next largest amount after the miner of Great Britain. He urgently commended these facts and figures to the serious consideration of every Member of the House, and especially to those who were inclined to oppose the principle embodied in the Bill upon the ground that it would cause danger from foreign competition. When the Estimates were under consideration some three years ago he elicited the fact that officials in Government Offices were employed something like six and a-half hours per day, and that where the hours were the shortest the salaries were the highest. It appeared to him at the time, and it still appeared to him, that if six and a-half hours were long enough for highly-paid officials to work under healthy conditions, eight hours a day were surely enough for miners toiling under conditions of danger and difficulty underground. He supported the Second Reading of the Bill in the belief, founded on the figures he had quoted to the House, that it would work no danger from foreign competition, so far as the mining industry was concerned, and because he believed that the object of the Bill could not be obtained by organised effort, which would, moreover, be costly, tedious, and uncertain in its results, and because he believed that legislation would secure the end desired, without the strife and bitterness which strikes engendered between employers and employed. As a set-off against the various failures of organised effort, two successes in Durham and Northumberland were referred to, but working men believed that their just claims would be more speedily realised by legislation. Sharing in that belief, he heartily supported the principle of the Bill, and concluded by seconding the Motion for its Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Roby.*)

*Sir A. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.), in moving the rejection of the Bill, said, that if this were really a proposal for a limitation to eight hours' work he would not be there to oppose it, for he quite agreed that a spell of eight hours was long enough for a man to work in a coal-pit. But it was nothing of the kind. This measure really meant that in some cases the men would only work four and a-half or five hours in a day. It was urged that a majority of the miners desired to see the Bill pass into law; but it was very easy to understand that when it was put to the men whether they would not like to work two and a-half hours per day less time, while getting no less, and possibly more, money than at present, it was not a difficult matter to get a majority to hold up their hands in favour of the proposal. In his own district of Staffordshire not half the men belonged to the Miners' Federation, and, in his belief, if the matter were fairly and fully explained to them, a great many would oppose the present proposal.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton) asked what was the hon. Member's authority for that statement?

*Sir A. HICKMAN said, his authority was his own personal observation and knowledge of his own men as a mine-owner himself in Staffordshire. He had taken the precaution to ascertain what proportion of the men belonged to the Miners' Federation, and what proportion were outside it. The hon. Member's statement that in the Durham district boys worked underground sometimes for 10 hours was incorrect. It had been shown that they only worked eight hours. If eight hours were too long for a boy to work, let there by all means be legislation on that subject; but that was no reason for not allowing grown men to work more than four or five hours if they desired to do so. One great objection to this proposal was that the dangers of working in a mine would be increased by the high pressure caused by a certain time being fixed for a man to leave the pit, for he would not have time to look round properly to see that everything was safe.

If a man was restricted in his time he would naturally neglect the precautions necessary to be taken. They all rejoiced at the successful results of factory legislation for women and children, but that had nothing to do with preventing grown men from working more than about five hours a day. Another question was how were wages to be regulated? Were all the men to be paid according to the fixed standard, or according to the hours they worked? In some cases this proposal would constitute a grave injustice to the employer, and in other cases it would be a gross injustice to the workman. A man who had to go only 100 yards to the "face" of the coal could work half an hour longer than a man who had to go a mile. Were they to be paid the same wages? Was it intended that the capital sunk in deep pits should be confiscated? Again, how was a man with a large family to maintain himself and them if he were prohibited from working more than five hours a day, which would suffice for a single man? What became, then, of the "living wage"? How was a hard-and-fast line to be drawn? Those were all questions for the consideration of the House. Opportunity should not be denied to men to advance themselves. There were men who wished to raise themselves in the world, and in his own district some of the most prosperous and men of whom they were most proud had been, or whose fathers at any rate had been, working colliers. What became of the liberty of the individual which the great Liberal Party talked of? Looking that morning at the last pay-sheet from his Warwickshire colliery he found that the dead expenses for wages in pit and on bank, and for timber, and other things outside amounted to £353, against only £210 actually paid for getting the coal. That £353 remained an absolutely fixed sum, but the output would be reduced 18 per cent. The best calculation he had been able to make was that, supposing wages were reduced in proportion and the tonnage rate remained the same, if this Bill was passed the increased cost of getting coal would vary from 6d. to 1s. 6d. per ton—that was to say, the cost of coal in this country must necessarily be increased from £4,000,000 to £12,000,000 per annum. Were the Government prepared to put that extra burden on the industries and manufactures of the country to benefit nobody? Would they be able to bear it? It was said that if the men worked shorter hours they would be able to work harder and produce more coal. In 1883 the coal produced by each man was 293 tons, but in 1892 it had fallen to 254 tons, and that in spite of the extraordinary mechanical improvements that had been introduced. The reduction was still greater in 1893, but the figures for that year, owing to the great colliery strike, did not afford a fair comparison. Between 1882 and 1889 the decrease of coal produced per miner per annum in Great Britain was 41 tons, whereas in Germany the increase was 79 tons, in France 40 tons, and in Belgium 25 tons. The adoption of this proposal would have most disastrous effects in the Staffordshire district, in which the mines for many years past had been subjected to a great influx of water, and had consequently been worked under great difficulties. A Mines Drainage Commission was empowered by Act of Parliament to levy rates on mine-owners for the purpose of pumping water, and the expense of that was quite as much as they could bear; and if there ensued a large reduction of output—which would assuredly be the case if the proposals contained in the Bill were carried—the Mines Drainage Commission would be unable to go on, the whole district would be drowned out, and great populations like those of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, which depended for their prosperity on cheap coal, would suffer seriously. He shuddered, indeed, to think of the consequences that would ensue. With regard to the suggestion of local option, that would add greatly to the unfairness, for the advantage to the district which maintained its present position would be enormous. If it was intended or desired to restrict the working hours of miners, the restriction should be upon the hours of actual working, and not upon the hours spent in the pit; then they would all be upon the same footing. This was not a question between employer and employed. It was a question that affected the community. As a mine-owner, he believed the first effect would be to put a large sum of money into his pocket, for an artificial scarcity of coal would be created and coal-owners would be able to charge their own prices. That, however, would not last long. They would very soon discover the reality of foreign competition. Cheap coal had been the foundation of the manufacturing supremacy of this country, and upon it that supremacy depended. The proposal before the House was impracticable and unjust both to the employer and the workman, and he moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

*Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, he desired to second the Amendment. He had the honour to represent a large mining constituency. There was as much capital in the district which he represented—not only in the mines, but in the industries dependent on cheap coal—as almost anywhere in the country. He had also the honour to represent a large agricultural population whose well-being was almost determined by their proximity to the centres of population from which there was a large and continuous demand for their produce. All his constituents were strongly opposed to the Bill. The miners were especially opposed to it, because they were wide enough awake to know that if the Bill were passed it would mean either a decrease in wages and of the quantity of coal brought out of the pits. The Prime Minister, who received a deputation with respect to this Bill, had pointed out that there were now 50,000 more men employed in the coal trade in order to get no larger a quantity of coal than formerly, and he seemed to draw the deduction that this showed that the coal trade could afford to maintain the addition. But the employment of these extra men had in reality been due to a variety of causes not connected with a healthy or unhealthy state of the coal industry, amongst them being the necessity to work thinner seams than formerly and the greater distances underground from which the coal had to be got. As a matter of fact, the coal trade was in anything but a healthy condition, and certainly, so far as his part of the country was concerned, the miners themselves had no desire that it should be subject to worse injury from legislation of this kind. The hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Roby) had tried to make out that, so far as Northumberland and Durham were concerned, the opposition to the eight hours day was not so great as had been represented, but he could assure the hon. Member that he was misinformed. The ballot to which the hon. Member had referred was taken in October, 1892, almost immediately after a strike which had been a source of great irritation. It was taken at a time when the agents of the Miners' Federation had been about a great deal stirring up the men on this special point, and yet it showed that out of 72,000 men in the Union 15,800 voted in favour of this proposal and 36,000 against it, while there were 19,000 abstainers. But it should also be remembered that there were 51,000 men not in the Union. There was no doubt that in Wales there was also considerable opposition. In South Wales there had been no ballot on the question, but there had been various expressions of opinion, and from one quarter he had received a communication the writer of which declared that if the Bill were carried it would be the greatest calamity which had befallen the miners for the last 50 years. So far as the safety of the miners was concerned, under a statutory eight hours from surface to surface Act, the time of the miners would be so contracted that they would not be able to look properly after their own safety, and thus the accidents in the local mines would be considerably increased. When they proceeded further to consider the matter, they must also take into account that this Bill proposed to limit the powers of adult males in dealing with their own work. He would not ask whether the State ought to exercise a function of this kind. Reference had been made to the precedent of their railway legislation; but this Bill was not on the lines of that precedent. In the case of the railways, if men complained that they were overworked they had the power to appeal to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade could decide whether the hours were reasonable or unreasonable. But it was not a proposition of this kind that was now made to the House with regard to the miners. If it were, he would have looked at the matter differently. The limit fixed by the Bill was perfectly absolute; 683,000 men were told that the State required them to work no longer than eight hours. No loophole whatever was left for the exigencies of the trade. And in respect to that point he could assure the House that the difficulties which would present themselves if the Bill were carried would be very numerous. The principle of the Bill appeared to him to be wholly wrong. It was not really in the interests of the Trades Unions themselves that the functions of those bodies should be superseded by such acts of legislation. If he wanted to do damage to the Trades Unions — which he did not — he would say to them — Come to Parliament and let Parliament adjudicate on matters of this kind. But under this Bill no engineman or foreman would be allowed to be at work more than eight hours, yet how often had it occurred in cases of accident that men had taken their meals and even slept in mines! The provisions of the Bill were, in fact, too absolute, and could not be made to work. One man might go down the pit at a quarter to 6 and another at a quarter to 7. How were they to tell whether the men worked the eight hours? It was impossible unless they had all the men watched. This was an endeavour to bring men who were perfectly able to take care of themselves under the control of the Government. At least one-third of the men in the coal trade had made their regulations as to the hours of labour, and the very men who were demanding this Bill in 1893 showed their independence by being able to take a week's holiday utterly regardless of the inconvenience they caused to the manufacturers. He wanted to know why the State should interfere at all? There was no occasion for such interference. Neither in respect to the prevention of accidents nor the preservation of the health of the men was the Bill called for. The reasons for the Bill were what he should call false reasons of political economy. He was especially impressed with the false character of the arguments in a political economical point of view, for the effect of the Bill could not be to raise the price of coal, and keep up the wages of labour by that means. In this connection he did not like to touch on the Report of the Labour Commission, for they had not got that Report in a regular way before them as yet, nor the signatures of the members had not even been put to it. But from various indications it looked as if the Commission had not been able to come to the conclusion that an eight hours day was desirable. It was a remarkable fact that the Miners' Federation, owing to the weakness of their case, declined to give evidence before the Commission. Yet before the Report of the Commission was issued they came to that House and asked the House to go beyond what was believed to be the Commission's recommendations. His belief was that the Bill would be certain to reduce the wages of the miners. And as to the blow that would be dealt at the coal-owner, this would be difficult to over-estimate. The cost of coal being increased, the demand would, as a matter of course, be decreased. But to decrease the demand meant very probably bringing it below the point at which the mines could be profitably worked. It was a well-understood thing that it was the extra quantity of coal drawn from the mine above a certain point which constituted the profit to the mine-owner. If it were a question of the health of the men he would take a different view of the matter, but it was not so. But the average number of hours worked per day was much less than eight, since in most cases the men did not work every day in the week, and there was considerable time taken up in getting to and from workings. He admitted the difficulty presented as to the case of the boys in Durham and Northumberland, but he held that in respect to this there had been much exaggeration. It was a long time since the Durham boys had worked as much as eleven days in the fortnight. In 1892 the average was only 4·69 days per week or nine days a fortnight. If hon. Members thought the boys were overworked, let them accompany him to the pit mouth, and they would find these lads none the worse for the work they did; they were as fine a race of boys as could be found, and would almost carry any two Members of the House on their back. The effect of this Bill, by reducing the hours of drawing coals from 10 to 8 hours, on the miners would be that they would lose two hours a day, and their wages would have to be reduced by one-fifth; and as the earnings in the Durham pits were only a little over 5s. a day the wages would be reduced by practically 1s. per day. Now, if a man's wages were reduced 1s. per day on the four or five days of the week that he worked it was certain that he would have to put up with the loss of a good many little comforts in his home. The pits were only working 4½ days a week in Durham, and yet it was asked that these days should be limited to eight hours from bank to bank. He would illustrate the effect of this Bill on miners. It was obvious that if the owner was answerable for every man being out of the pit in eight hours, at the end of each eight hours all men in the pit must have come out. If a coal hewer now worked in the face five and a-half to six hours when the pit draws 10 hours, in order that his coal should be brought to bank his time must be reduced one hour at least, and his wages by one-fifth; he must earn less or be paid more per ton. If he got the same wages, the cost of his labour must be advanced 20 per cent. If the other men in the pit who were down 10 hours had to get the same quantity out in eight hours as they did in 10, either there must be more of them, which again meant more wages for the same quantity, or less wages and less quantity. If two sets of boys were allowable, then two sets would have to work for what one set used to earn, or costs must go up. In a Durham colliery he could name the hewers numbered 575 and other men and boys 731. These 731 men and boys who were down 10 hours must either have their wages reduced one-fifth, to let in others for two hours, or one-fifth more men be employed to get the same quantity. The loss on wages in Durham was estimated at £700,000, and to the owners at £825,000. The proposed change would involve a division into two shifts of five hours each for men and boys not hewers; and it would be practically impossible to find boys to make up the difference. It had been argued that if the cost of coal went up under the new arrangement the royalties must come down. The average royalties in the county of Durham were 5d. per ton, and he did not know how that was to be pulled down. Would the House consent to pull these royalties down? The difference in the cost of working could not be got out of horse keep, grease, oil, or other stores; and it must be obtained by raising the price to the consumer. Would the consumer pay the increase? This Bill applied to Cleveland, where the use of native ores had been reduced one-half by foreign ores; so, in order to employ our people at home, we should raise the cost artificially of producing the native ores, as the Cleveland mines came under this Bill. When the Yorkshire colliers were out on strike the cost of coal could not be raised at the Tees Ironworks without being followed by the blowing out of the Middlesbrough furnaces. With a year's production of 2,500,000 tons no ironmaster was receiving a single sixpence of profit; few obtained interest for capital; and certainly none anything for depreciation. The only effect of raising the price of coal would be to put a number of furnaces out of blast and to throw a large number of men out of employment. Six or seven years ago the iron of the district was made out of native ore; but to-day one-half of it was made out of Spanish ore. Were we to handicap Cleveland and native ores by bringing in more Spanish ore? There was not a single trade in the country that could bear the increased cost of coal. Yesterday a Member of the House, speaking of the cotton trade, told him that for two years he had not drawn a single sixpence from that business; and personally as an ironmaster he had not drawn sixpence for three years. Yet it was proposed by this Bill to add to the cost of coal. Hon. Members had discussed the point at some length whether the same quantity of work could be done in eight hours as was done now. Every practical man would tell them that as much work could not be done. In Durham the hours had been reduced in 1890 from 11 to 10, and the result was that the output per man working under ground had been reduced from 435 tons in 1890 to 401 tons in 1891. How did our hours of labour compare with those of other countries? In the United Kingdom the average was 7½ hours at the face; in France it was 8¼; in Germany, 8 to 12; in America, 9½ to 10; in Belgium the hours were for 1,650, 9 hours; for 62,000, 9 to 11; for 32,000, 11 to 12; and for 115 over 12 hours. Now, he wanted to take up a few minutes' time in speaking of the foreign competition with which they had to deal. Large contractors told him that all their iron came from Belgium, and they had not a single contract other than with Belgium. In one case his informant was himself a large coalowner and ironmaster. An English company with English capital was sending out to South America a bridge built of Belgian iron. The Belgian ironmaster, being asked why he beat his English competitors said, "My wages are 2 f. 50 c. a day, and my men work 11 hours a day." How were we to diminish the hours of drawing? He was not disputing about the hours at the face. An engineer who told him that he had no iron from abroad added, "I screwed every English tender down by German or Belgian prices." Another told him of a company, working with English capital, obtaining steel sleepers for a railway in Bechuanaland from Germany. The freight down the Rhine from Dusseldorf to Antwerp was 3s. a ton, put on board, and the freight to the Thames was about 3s. 6d., whilst the freight from Cardiff to the Thames was 7s. 6d. per ton. It was cases of this kind that made him believe that any addition to the cost would be an addition to the difficulties the English labourer had in his competition with the foreigner. The restriction was asked for as a benefit to the men, but he believed it would be detrimental to their best interests, and probably end in a large number of them being placed out of work. There was a party of hon. Gentlemen opposite who were very much opposed to foreign competition, and who used all their efforts against it. He might state for their information that the roof now going up on the new United Service Institution was of Belgian iron; so was the roof of the Athenæum at Liverpool. [*A cry of* "Shame!"] Yes, and he did not want to increase the shame of these transactions by legislation. His hon. Friends opposite took the House rather by surprise the other day in respect to a question upon which they felt very acutely and in regard to which he entirely sympathised with them—he meant the depression of agriculture. Well, a stranger whom he met the other day told him that "Norfolk thrives best when the Lancashire, Durham, Northumberland, and West Riding miners are fully employed." The food that went into their houses made all the difference to agriculture. This Bill would send more of our trade abroad. The Poor Law Returns for last December were the worst we had had for four or five years. He pleaded the case against this Bill as strongly as he could, because he felt strongly upon it. It was heart-breaking, when one met men whom one had known all one's life, to think that by one legislative act they were to be deprived of the means of earning their daily bread. He looked upon this Bill as dealing almost a death-blow to English industry, particularly in the neighbourhood of Middlesbrough, now struggling with hard competition, and he believed it would be very detrimental to the working classes of this country.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Sir A. Hickman.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) said, the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill had taken up a different attitude from that adopted by the Mineowners' Association, of which he was a distinguised member. The hon. Member had said he did not so much object to an Eight Hours Bill for miners providing that it applied to the working places and not to the hours worked from bank to bank. The Mineowners' Association said

> "that the hours of adult labour ought not to be fixed by Parliament, but ought to be left to agreement between employers and employed."

He was very pleased that the hon. Member had come round so far as to express agreement with the supporters of the Bill in the great principle that Parliament had a right to limit the hours of labour. Hon. Members who had objected to the Bill so far had looked at it purely from a financial and business point of view. There were higher things for the House to consider, however, than business and financial arrangements, and the question that ought chiefly to weigh with the House in dealing with the Bill was that of the health and welfare of the general community. He believed hon. Members were unanimous in thinking that mining was a dangerous trade, but they were not united on the question whether it was an unhealthy trade. Some of the gentlemen who had spoken in the Debate had tried to prove that work down a pit was not unhealthy. If any of those gentlemen who were mine-owners would go into their own mines and to the place where the air coming from the pit entered—what was called the fan-drift—they would, he thought, form a very different opinion. The air was drawn from the colliery by a large fan to the surface. The air that passed through a mine was sometimes driven three, four, or five miles through the different workings. During its passage through the mine it took up the natural gases given out by the coal and the impurities of the coal face. It passed through limited spaces where perhaps 1,000 or more men and boys were working, and where there were perhaps 100 or more horses. He had himself several times been in a fan-drift, and he should certainly be very sorry to spend more than an hour, or a couple of hours at any rate, in such an atmosphere. Somebody, however, had to work in the air near the fan-drift, and hon. Members might judge whether work in such an atmosphere was healthy. He was glad to see that all the colliery proprietors were not opposing the Bill, but that several of them were supporting it. He held in his hand a letter he had received from the Secretary of the Durham County Colliery Engineers' Association which rather confirmed the views he held about the ventilation of pits. The Secretary wrote that the Association had passed a resolution in favour of the Bill, and he added that two-thirds of the members of the Association were working in underground engine-rooms from 10 to 11 hours a day, whilst three-fifths were working 12 hours a day seven days a week, or 84 hours in all. The engineering rooms in which these men worked were invariably at a temperature ranging from 90 to 100 degrees. Many views had been expressed as to how this Bill would effect the trade of the country. Similar views had been stated whenever a measure of the kind had been passed. He himself did not believe that the Bill would materially alter the price of coal to the public. In the two counties with which he was best acquainted, and he believed the same thing could be said of the North of England, the collieries were only working from four to four and a-half days a week. Surely it would be very much better to work eight hours a day regularly for five days a week than to work longer hours on a smaller number of days a week. The men would certainly lead healthier and happier lives, and they would know exactly what was coming in at the end of the week. It was said that a limitation of the hours of labour would not make the pits safer than they were at present. If, however, a man were tired out by long hours of labour, he could not be anything like as vigorous at the end of that time as he was at the beginning of it, or in the middle of it, and if his physical vigour were taken away he was less capable of guarding himself against the danger of accidents than he would otherwise be. Many accidents were caused by men overworking themselves or attempting to do too much. In his opinion, neither the colliery owners nor the public had anything to fear from the passage of this Bill, whilst, on the other hand, the result of its adoption would be that the miners would be able to live more vigorous, healthier, happier, and regular lives than they could at present, and would be better able to fulfil the duties of citizenship.

MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, those who supported the Bill might congratulate themselves on the fact that they had at any rate succeeded in producing one case in which an employer had tried the experiment of an eight hours day with success. He had not, however, gathered that even that employer was in favour of a legal eight hours day. Everybody was in favour of reducing hours as much as possible. Those who opposed the Bill were, however, in favour of reducing them by voluntary arrangement and negotiation with the employers. He contended that no very serious effort had ever been made by the men's leaders to obtain an eight hours day by negotiation. It was said that the men were not strong enough to obtain a reduction of hours for themselves. Really he thought that the leaders of the Miners' Federation showed too much modesty on this point. He gave them credit for a great deal more power than they admitted possessing. There was no autocrat who exercised more influence than the leaders of the Miners' Federation. They had shown their power in numerous instances. Two years ago the men in the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation Districts were called out because it was supposed that coal was being got too quickly. The recollection of the way in which the men stood by their leaders in the last great strike was fresh in everybody's memory, and he believed it was only on Friday last at Wigan that the Federation made a decree that no man should work more than eight hours a day and more than four days a week, or earn more than 6s. a day. After this display of the power of the Union, it was surely preposterous to contend that the men were unable to secure a reduction of hours by their own individual efforts. Now, as to the unanimity of the men in desiring eight hours. It was asserted by hon. Gentlemen responsible for the measure—notably the hon. Member for Ince—that the men were practically unanimous—that was to say, that more than 90 per cent. of them were in favour of it. The hon. Member was fond of speaking in his collective capacity. He often spoke for several hundred thousand at once. Not long ago he undertook to speak for all the Trades Unionists, and no doubt later on this afternoon he would speak for hundreds of thousands more. It was curious, though, that while the hon. Member, whose constituency contained a great number of miners, was returned by only a small majority, he himself (Mr. Legh), who represented a neighbouring constituency containing almost as many miners, had three times the majority of the hon. Member. It was curious to note how some hon. Members regarded the ballot under different circumstances. When the servants of the London and North Western Railway Company by ballot expressed their views upon particular points, the House was told to attach very little value to that expression of opinion; but when the miners expressed by the same means their preference for a legal eight hours day, the same people considered it an inspired utterance, and thought it was almost sacrilege to say anything which could cast doubt upon such an expression of opinion. He was not so absolutely convinced by this ballot as some hon. Members appeared to be. If he was not mistaken, that ballot was conducted by the officials of the Miners' Union, that those officials knew how the men voted, and in many instances themselves inscribed the men's votes. It was obvious, therefore, that anyone who was opposed to the eight hours day would hardly attain great popularity by showing his hostility to this measure. Therefore, with all due deference to those concerned, he did not think they should put too much implicit trust and reliance upon these ballots. They were told by those who supported this Bill that it would secure greater safety, of which he himself was doubtful, and that it would lead to increased exertions on the part of the men, which would tell to their advantage, and that it would have no effect whatever on the output of coal. But in 1888 he noticed that the hon. Member for Ince urged the acceptance of such a measure as this upon his hearers, because he said it would reduce the output of coal by 20,000,000 tons, which would be a most excellent thing; while the Member for Rhondda, during the Debate on the Bill of 1892, said he was prepared to support the Bill for that very reason. For his own part, he (Mr. Legh) felt no doubt whatever that that was the main object of this Bill. If it was a Bill which was brought in merely to reduce the hours, why were they not content to take it for 48 hours per week? He believed that 48 hours per week would be secured with practically little difficulty, but the object of this measure was to restrict the output, under the mistaken and erroneous impression that wages would rise, because it would be possible to raise the price of coal against the consumer. Nothing in this Bill was so extraordinary as the success which it had achieved. It seemed to exercise the most demoralising effect upon politicians on both sides of the House. He observed with surprise gentlemen whom he looked upon as sound in the political views they professed competing with one another for the honour of bringing in this Bill, and the honour of having their names put upon it. He should like to address a warning to gentlemen on his side of the House who had pledged themselves to support the measure. Many, or at least some, of them had arrived at a sort of compromise by saying that they would support the principle of the

Bill, and reserve to themselves the liberty of moving Amendments in Committee. He should be very much surprised if any Amendments were accepted in Committee at all. It seemed to him that this was most emphatically a question upon which there was no room for compromise at all. They had got either to vote for an eight hours day from bank to bank, or they had got to vote against it. He would like to ask the hon. Member for Ince whether he would be prepared to accept an Amendment such as was foreshadowed by the Prime Minister yesterday? Whether, for instance, he was likely to accept the principle of local option—[*Cries of* "No, no"!]—or whether he was likely to accept the proposal that the hours with regard to working at the "face" alone should be affected? ["No!"] Of course, he was not prepared to accept anything of the kind. If the Bill ever got into Committee, the supporters of it would refuse to accept any suggestions of this kind. He did not blame them, because they were perfectly logical and perfectly consistent in refusing to accept any such suggestion. The principle of the Bill was a hard-and-fast and rigid one, and the moment anyone began to introduce limitations and Amendments the Bill would be destroyed altogether. He was sure that was the opinion of the gentlemen responsible for the introduction of the measure. As the Representative of a large number of colliers, it would be his duty to vote against this Bill, because he believed it would be most prejudicial to the people for whose sake it was brought forward; it would not increase the safety or wages of the men, but would have an exactly opposite effect: it would add to the cost of production, and it would inflict an almost irreparable blow upon one of the most important industries of the country.

Mr. BIRRELL (Fife, W.) said, he represented a Scotch constituency, which was composed of one of the oldest coalfields in Great Britain, and which still had an annual output of some 4,000,000 tons, and he was therefore naturally anxious to support the Second Reading of a measure which he could honestly say from experience lay nearer to the hearts of his constituents than any measure now engaging, or likely to engage, the attention of the House for a considerable time to come. They had been told by some speakers that an eight hours day was an experiment—a leap in the dark, and a step that could not be taken without great danger; but he was happy to say the constituency of West Fife had enjoyed what was commonly called an eight hours day from bank to bank for 23 years. [An hon. Member: How got?] Never mind how got. He made bold to say there was no man in the County of Fife, whatever his connection with the coal trade might be, who would ever dream of going back to the abandoned system. If that were so, whether it were right or wrong, wise or foolish, to come to this House for these things, it was idle to say that any danger would accrue to the conduct of this industry, when experience had shown that eight hours could be worked. He quite agreed that it would be absurd to pretend that the coal industry of this country was in a weak position. On the contrary, it occupied in most parts a strong and well-organised position, and he said the admission of that made by the miners was not a proof of their weakness, but of their strength. They did not come to Parliament, as 50 or 100 years ago they might well have done, as grimy serfs, beseeching some relaxation from a horrible toil imposed upon them by cruel masters. They came with the experience of a quarter of a century behind them, proving the economic and moral advantages of shortened hours of labour; that their trade could be carried on under these conditions economically and safely, and that they were only anxious to make them general and universal. Every time this question was discussed some absurd argument was by common consent dropped. They used to hear that such a Bill as this would sap the independence and individuality of miners; that it was an odious and horrible thing that a man should have his hours of labour restricted by the general law of the land. There was a time when men opposed Unions altogether, but these views were no longer expressed. On the contrary, miners were now told that if they wanted to get their hours of labour shortened, they should support with all their strength their Unions. It must be obvious that it was as much a tyranny to obey the private law of a Union as it was to obey a law of this House. They really had had no genuine, whole-hearted opposition to the Bill. Opposition to the Bill was impossible, because nobody had been found to say that eight hours a day was not enough for a man to work underground. The only question was whether that restriction should be left to be fought by private negotiation, which usually meant private warfare, or whether the time was not ripe for a general settlement upon the lines of this Bill? The report of the North of England United Coal Trade Association, which was issued in objection to this proposal, spoke, amongst other things, of the exceedingly healthy and happy nature of the miner's life. He did not dispute that, taking one trade, that of the miner was as good; but that was irrelevant to the question. He observed from the report, which was as full of figures as a Budget speech, that miners were free from the gout. There were a good many colliery proprietors, both in this House and in another place, who, unless their grimaces belied them, suffered very much from this most painful disease. They knew now how to secure a cure. Let them abandon for a time their sylvan retreats, which decorated the North Country, and go down the shaft of a coal mine, lie on their stomachs with pick-axes in their hands—and if at the end of the week their claim for piecework might not be a large sum, they would feel the satisfaction of sharing the immunity of the miner from this complaint. Experience in Scotland went to show that the eight hours' limit was a wise and proper limit, which, having been once introduced, was never likely to be retired from.

Mr. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton) said, that one of the great difficulties which eight-hours men like himself had on this occasion was the fact that, whereas during the last 50 years some 40 Bills had passed the House for the relief of the working classes and various trades with the unanimous voice of the persons concerned, this Bill came before the House stoutly opposed by a very large portion of the members of the great National Union of Miners, for whom it was desired that this legislation should be enacted. The hon. Member for Eccles had presented the case of the miners, so far as the physical conditions of labour were concerned, with force and eloquence; and he quite understood what were the motives which had induced his hon. Friend to suspend his logical faculty and give full scope to that feeling which all shared, but which their reason sometimes forced them to restrain for the sake of the large issues involved. He had for long years been desirous of curtailing the hours of labour in all the industries of the country, especially in the case of miners, and he had consoled himself with the hope that so powerful had become Trades Organisations, and notably that connected with mining, that it would be possible, when they made a practically unanimous demand for reduced hours of labour, and conveyed that opinion to their masters and to the public, for that reduction to be made without coming to Parliament to relieve the Trades Unions of the reponsibility which they ought to bear. Last year he introduced a Bill which would have given Trades Unions power to make effective such unanimous demands, and he was still prepared to support legislation of that kind; but when he considered the history of industries in this country during the last 25 or 30 years, his reason and conscience revolted against supporting a Bill which would make Parliament responsible for matters which belonged solely to employers and employed. He lived in the hope and expectation that their dream of conciliation, peace, and arbitrament in trade disputes would become a realised fact. They had an instance of that in the appointment of the Board of Arbitration under Lord Shand, to deal with the question of wages. He could imagine no difficulties with the hours of labour so great as those connected with the rate of wages, and if one could be settled by arbitration, so might the other be. He would urge the House not to enter upon a path the end of which they could not foretell. No one could accuse him of being a friend of Masters' Organisations. He had never belonged to one, and never would. On the contrary, he had promoted by every means in his power the combination of workmen to secure their end. He had tried recently to give an object-lesson in reducing hours of labour in order to maintain the engineering industry, by promoting goodwill between employer and employed; and he could not for the life of him understand why it was not possible to accomplish the same thing in the mining industry if the men were practically unanimous. A few years ago he gave evidence before a Miners' Congress at Boston, United States. He had stated then that it was the boast of the British workmen that they were partners with the masters in all the great industries of this country, and that whenever the combined members of a particular trade throughout the country were unanimously in favour of a certain measure being adopted, they were able to gain their end sooner or later, and that Parliament was bound to admit that the men were right. If any hon. Gentleman thought he was taking up a position with regard to this Bill because he had no knowledge of industrial questions, he knew very little about the matter. He had given hostages enough for the opinions he held. He had spent his life among workmen, and had given those questions the attention of a lifetime. It was said that if the hours of labour were shortened the price of coal would be increased. That might or might not be the case. There were, however, in his opinion, greater evils to be feared for this country than any which were likely to arise owing to an increase in the price of coal. In no other country in the world was coal so wastefully used as in England. He made that statement after a practical experience on the question, at some time or other, in his capacity as an engineer in almost every country of Europe. With the exception of the large iron and steel works in England—in which economy in every way was compulsory owing to the competition in the trade—the waste of coal that went on in the large manufacturing centres was enormous. Before the year 1832, when there was a coal famine, no means were thought of by which the waste of coal in factories could be diminished. He was inclined to believe that if this Bill became law the output of coal would be increased and not decreased. That was an opinion contrary to the view that was generally taken on the subject, and one of his reasons for it was the fact that up to the present time in no existing industry was machinery so little employed as in the coal trade in England. For example, there was no machinery for hewing coal by steam or for economising the number of men employed underground. There was nothing in the Bill to prevent masters introducing machinery to do the work in their collieries now done entirely by hand labour, and that work could be done in four or five hours with a less number of men than at present in eight hours. If pressure under such circumstances was placed on the employer, and the employers in seeking to relieve themselves increased their output by machinery, and thus reduced the number of men employed, would Parliament be prepared to protect the employers against any unreasonable opposition on the part of the miners? He believed that Parliament would find, in consequence of passing this Bill, demands made upon it which at present it did not foresee, all of which might be removed from the floor of this House if only Parliament would encourage the coalowners and miners of the country to meet and consult each other, as men and masters had met on other occasions, and see if they could not arrange terms on which a reduction of hours might be made without imperiling an important and great industry. These were the conditions under which alone this great mining industry could prosper, or in fact under which any industry in the country could prosper. He was so strongly in favour of a reduction of the hours of labour that he desired to see it done in the most expeditious way, so that there would not be fresh source of trouble, difficulty, and strikes in the future; but how would it be possible, when Parliament had once taken the responsibility of passing an Act to relieve Trades Unions of their responsibilities—how was it possible for Parliament to prevent itself going further and further in relation to other industries as well as that of coal mining? For his own part, he was perfectly convinced, from the beneficial results that had already sprung from the shortening of hours, that by a peaceful and conciliatory process the reduction of hours would become universal, and therefore on these grounds he asked Parliament to hesitate before it puts its hand to a new order of things, and before committing itself to what might interfere not only with the coal industry, but with other great and important industries of the country.

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, it would be impossible for any speaker on a Wednesday afternoon, when so many Members were desirous of addressing the House, to attempt to cover the whole field of controversy opened by this Bill, and he should therefore confine himself to one aspect of it, and to that alone; but he trusted, as a member of the Labour Commission, which had given a great deal of attention to the question, he might be permitted to offer a few observations. His hon. Friend the Member for the Newton Division of Lancashire (Mr. Legh) referred to the fact, which he believed was notorious, that a considerable number of Members proposed to vote for the Second Reading of the Bill, reserving to themselves the right to vote in the Committee stage for an Amendment introducing the principle of local option. He desired to offer a few reasons to the House for regarding that as an unwise and undesirable course to pursue. Unless hon. Members were really prepared to support the Bill, whether the principle of local option was introduced in Committee or not, such a course seemed to him either illogical or not quite straightforward. It was not quite straightforward, if they thought this was a convenient way of defeating the Bill, to vote for the Second Reading and afterwards vote for an Amendment that would kill it. He might be allowed to observe that the leaders of the miners on many occasions had expressed the opinion they would rather have no Bill at all than a Bill that did not provide a uniform eight hours day in every district.

Mr. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): From bank to bank.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR said, he therefore did not think it would be straightforward to vote for the Second Reading with the intention of afterwards adopting a course which it was known would cause the Bill to be dropped. He entirely agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for the Newton Division of Lancashire (Mr. Legh) that the miners, if they were right in asking for this measure at all, were right in asking that its application should be uniform and universal. Uniformity in the hours of labour worked in mines in every district of the country was, in fact, an essential part of the Bill. His hon. Friend the Member for one of the Divisions of Fife (Mr. Birrell) used an argument that had been commonly used in this House and elsewhere. The hon. Member said it was generally acknowledged that an eight hours day was a good thing; that if it was a good thing when procured by the action of Trades Unions, how could it be bad when it was secured by legislative enactment? His hon. Friend always amused the House by his speeches, but he ventured to think on this occasion his logic was at fault. The argument was misleading. The principle of the Bill was a uniform eight hours day, and the reason why the miners asked for legislation on the subject was because they believed that by legislative enactment alone could a uniform eight hours day and a permanent eight hours day be secured. In these circumstances, it was idle to argue that if an eight hours day secured by Trades Unionism was a good thing, it must also be a good thing when secured by legislation. Most Members of the House would agree that eight hours was a sufficient time for a man to work underground, and that it was desirable that where longer hours were worked they should, if possible, be shortened. But when they said that an eight hours day was desirable they did not mean to say that it was desirable apart from the consequences that it might involve. What was meant was that it would be desirable if it could be secured without producing evil consequences which would more than outweigh the benefits. That was all that he meant at any rate, and they might honestly say and feel that an eight hours day for underground workers was desirable without meaning that it was desirable here and now, in existing circumstances, in reference to every district and to every mine in the Kingdom, and perfectly irrespective of the means by which it was to be secured. The argument which had been used on this subject might be equally applied to wages. He believed that most Members of the House would agree that it would be desirable that the wages not only of miners, but of all workers in this country, should be higher than they now are. But did it follow that because a rise of wages would be desirable when secured through Trade Unions or arrangement between employer and employed, that it would be equally desirable that Parliament should intervene and fix a higher scale of wages in order to increase the remuneration of the working classes of the country? It appeared to him to be obvious that a rise of wages, even when procured by the pressure of Trades Unions, would be a bad thing if that rise was such as the trade could not properly bear, and if it would end in a limitation of the field of employment for all except the best class of workmen. If this was true in regard to a rise of wages secured in that way, what were they to say of a rise of wages secured by an Act of Parliament? Was it not abundantly evident that in such circumstances the evils which he had indicated might possibly follow even from a rise of wages obtained by a Trade Union would follow in a tenfold degree from the interference of Parliament?

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Who asks for the interference of Parliament with regard to wages?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR said, he was merely using the reference to wages as an illustration, and he would say that if the argument was good with regard to wages it was also good with regard to hours. He could not disguise from himself that the body of men who were promoting this Bill were not a weak or oppressed or disorganised body. On the contrary, they were one of the most powerful and highly organised bodies of workmen in the Kingdom. Had they used their strength to obtain a reduction of the hours of labour? The demand for an eight hours day was hardly seven years old. It began, he thought, in 1887, in a district in Scotland, and did not obtain the support of the miners as a whole till 1889.

Mr. PICKARD: Might I inform the hon. Member that we began this agitation in 1864?

*Mr. GERALD BALFOUR said, there might have been an agitation on the part of a comparatively small number of men in the year mentioned by the hon. Member, but the agitation had not become important until 1887. In the years that had since elapsed how many strikes had there been in favour of short hours in mines as compared with 'the number of strikes which had taken place in order to secure a rise of wages? But the miners said they wanted a uniform eight hours day; that uniformity and universality were essential, and could never be procured by Trade Union efforts. At all events, it would require a universal strike of the whole body of miners all over the Kingdom, and this would involve such terrible consequences, such vast and widespread suffering, that the miners recoiled from so extreme a course. He thought there was probably another reason why they were desirous of substituting legislative for Trade Union action. The miners knew perfectly well that by Trade Union action they would not be able to secure an eight hours day in the important districts of Northumberland and Durham so long as those districts were opposed to an eight hours day. The hon. Member for Ince (Mr. Woods) openly proclaimed that this Bill would not be worth having unless it applied to every district in the country. He would like to know why it was that the leaders of the miners were so anxious to appeal to the Legislature on the question of hours when they were perfectly ready to strike for a rise of wages? There was no demand for uniformity when it was a question of a rise of wages. Why was uniformity insisted on in the question of the limitation of the hours of labour? He must express his conviction that if the miners were to attack this problem district by district, as they habitually did when it was a question of raising wages; if they were to appeal to employers to establish an eight hours day in particular districts where the economical conditions were such as to admit of it, there would be no more impossibility in obtaining an eight hours day in such districts than there was at the present time in obtaining a rise of wages. It might be said that it would not be permanent. It was possible that it might not. It was possible, when circumstances were less favourable, that there might be a return to longer hours, but he would observe that experience showed that a return to longer hours was much more infrequent where shorter hours had once been obtained than a return to lower wages. And further, if the miners were right in their contention that an eight hours day would not lead to an increase in the cost of production, there would be no possible reason for returning to longer hours. Again, the question of regular working ought not to be lost sight of. Even when the pits were in full working, miners seldom worked every day in the week. If the leaders of the miners would use their influence with the men to induce them to work more regularly throughout the week, say five or six days instead of four or five, then this difficulty would be of comparatively easy solution. Had the leaders ever approached the masters with an offer to encourage the men to work as regularly as possible, and not to omit a day or two in the week in consideration that the working hours should be eight hours a day ? He doubted whether they had ever done so. It was an eight hours day that they asked for, not 48 hours a week. He thought it would be reasonable to ask the miners to exhaust the means at their disposal for procuring a limitation of the hours of labour before asking Parliament to obtain it for them. Why was it that the miners insisted upon treating the question of hours differently from the question of wages ? If their statements were sincere that the economical conditions of coal mining would not be affected, that the cost of production would not be increased nor the output be lessened, he must confess that he saw no answer to his question. But looking to all the circumstances of the case, to what some of the leaders of the miners said, and what others of them did, he was driven to the conclusion that this was not so much a question of hours as a question of output. It was impossible for him to doubt that the idea in the minds of those who supported this Bill was that by means of it they would be enabled to limit the output, and that that limitation would cause a rise in the price of coal, and thus maintain wages and perhaps profits at an artificial level at the expense of the consumer. He was not going to argue the economic questions involved. The miners might be right or wrong, though personally he was convinced that the policy they advocated would end by injuring themselves even more than the community at large. He would simply put this alternative : If the miners were wrong in their belief as to the economical effects of the limitation of the output of coal, then was Parliament to be asked to depart from the principle it had hitherto observed in connection with adult labour; was Parliament to be asked to coerce employers in almost every part of the country, and both employers and employed in the two important districts of Durham and Northumberland ; was Parliament to be asked to enter upon legislation the effect of which would be to raise the price of coal, simply and solely in order to convince the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. Pickard) and his friends by bitter experience that their economics were unsound? If, on the other hand, the miners were right, then he would say was Parliament to be asked to do all this in order to help one of the strongest and best organised bodies of workmen in the country to levy a tax for their own benefit upon the rest of the community and upon those industries which were dependent upon coal for their motive power ? Much was possible in these days when the wisdom and justice of measures were apt to be gauged by the number of constituencies which their supporters in the country could command. But he did trust that the House of Commons would pluck up sufficient courage to throw out this Bill, which on its own merits, and apart from electoral considerations, would not be so much as entertained and in regard to which the best hope was that it would in practice prove so unworkable that by common consent it would be allowed to remain a dead letter.

Lord R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) : The two last Members who have spoken have taken up a good deal of time in developing their respective hobbies. My hon. Friend who has just resumed his seat has undoubtedly made an interesting speech, but it was a speech far beyond my comprehension. I cannot argue in that philosophical way and I cannot chop logic on various economic problems that my hon. Friend raises ; I do not regard this question from that point of view. My hon. Friend who sits behind me seems to think I was animated by electoral considerations ; that I, who am one supporter of the eight hours, am animated by electoral considerations; that that is my chief care, and that I have no care for the objects of the Bill itself.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I was speaking of the supporters generally, and did not signalise any particular Member.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: The expression was not limited to one particular person, but still it rather led one to believe that I was meant; but I pass away from my hon. Friend's speech, because we look at the question from a totally different point of view. I turn for a moment to the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Barnard Castle (Sir J. Pease). I know his speech so well that it is really not much use to answer it; it is the same thing always; it is an annual speech. He always talks of his model constituency; of his agricultural labourers who are so pre-eminently prosperous above all other agricultural labourers; of his miners, who are opposed to an eight hours law, but who, I believe, work for seven and a-quarter hours, or some period of that kind, every day, and then he talks of his splendid race of boys who have to work for, I believe, about 10 hours a day, or something very near it.

Mr. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid): Eight hours at the bank; I have said so before.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: That is not so stated in official documents. Until I see it in official documents I shall believe the boys' labour is longer than the men's in the Counties of Northumberland and Durham. While on this question, I turn to my hon. Friend behind me. He says, "You want a unanimous Eight Hours Bill all over the country, and to force it on a body of miners who do not desire it." So far as I am concerned, he is entirely in the wrong. I think the enormous bulk and mass of miners desire an eight hours law to be observed in mines—almost the whole of England, with the exception of Durham and Northumberland, the exception of a couple of Welsh towns, and another exception, the small district of Staffordshire which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Sir A. Hickman) represents—with those exceptions the great mass, the great preponderance and overwhelming majority of miners all over England, largely in Scotland, and largely in Wales, are in favour of an Eight Hours Bill. We carried it last Session in this House by a majority of 71, and I look upon a majority of the House of Commons very much as these gentlemen look upon a majority of the House of Commons—namely, as the opinion of Parliament representing the people of the United Kingdom, and on a crucial question like this I find a majority of 71. I think a great change has come over the opinion of the country on this question. A charge was made by the hon. Baronet who represents the Barnard Castle Division of Durham that the miners did not go before the Royal Commission on Labour, and he thinks that to be a great defect on their part. Why should they? The principle of this legislation has already been settled by Parliament itself, and by a considerable majority, and why should those who directly represent the miners waste their time in going before the Royal Commission on Labour, which, I believe, has come to no certain conclusion on any problem of labour that has been raised during that long inquiry? Why should these miners' representatives waste their time in convincing the Commission of the rights of a Bill of which this House of Commons is already convinced? I go to the invariable argument of the opponents of this Bill—that strikes are preferable to law. I do not agree with that. Together with Lord Dunraven, who entirely agrees with me on this eight hours question, I had the honour some years ago of receiving a large deputation representing the mining interest on this eight hours movement. Those who formed that deputation told me that they preferred resorting to the Legislature to obtain the demands of labour rather than to methods which often led to violence and great mischief. Curiously enough, I was so lost to all sense of political economy that I could not understand why the miners of the United Kingdom should be made the victims of paragraphs in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Where you have a large, overwhelming, and predominant mass of the workmen in one of the greatest industries of the country agreed upon one point—the limitation of the hours of labour—I think it is much better that they should come to this House rather than resort to other means for obtaining their object. What happened? This deputation went to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and he took a different view from that of myself and my noble Friend. He was much more old-fashioned in his views; at that time he did not understand Parliament legislating for the regulation of hours of labour, and he did not give an encouraging answer to the deputation. But the movement has gone on in spite of old-fashioned political economists, and in spite of all the efforts of the great colliery owners and the leaders of the miners in Durham and Northumberland. It has gone on in spite of such arguments as we have heard behind us to-day, arguments that I suppose are of great strength, but which I do not think are calculated to convince people interested in the industry as miners are. The movement has gone on until the Government are face to face this afternoon with a question on which they will, for the first time, have to take a line which shall guide the House. That is great progress considering that in 1883, when I ventured to recommend an eight hours day at a meeting at Walsall, I was subjected to denunciation for doing so by Liberal and Tory friends. What has the eight hours movement got behind it? It has some 400,000 miners, in the first place; and it has a great sanction from the action of the Government in the War Office Department. Why should not the miners claim the great advantages which have already been given to the Government artizans? These are arguments which never appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite, who are mortal enemies to any concession to the miners on this subject. I know them well, and I know that their race is nearly run. I cannot, for want of time, go over the wonderful results of the eight hours day in Messrs. Mather & Platt's works, which were alluded to by the hon. Member for the Gorton Division. But undoubtedly those who are acquainted with the report, and have read the results of this experiment, will be convinced of the merits of short hours of labour. I know the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Mather) will say that his was a voluntary arrangement. I answer that no voluntary arrangement can carry out a reduction of hours for 400,000 men. Only the Legislature or the force of a strike can do that. The hon. Member for Leeds could not suggest any alternative to the passing of this Bill; but he asked why did not the miners go to the masters with their demands, and use the arguments of persuasiveness on this point? Have we had much encouragement from the colliery owners in this Debate to do so? And is there anything in the coal strike of last year to encourage any miner for any object to resort to the means that were resorted to last year? I calculate that the strike of last year cost the country about £25,000,000 in one way or another, with the result of the suspension of all kinds of business and industry. And are we to be told, as we are told practically, that we are to advise the miners who want this Bill to resort to the proceedings which those engaged in the coal industry resorted to last year? If we have got to get reforms of the laws of labour I hope to Heaven we shall never have to resort to the remedies which some of the owners indirectly suggest! What would be the result to the miner if this Bill passed into law? Would not the results be the same as those which have followed the arrangement of the hon. Member for the Gorton Division? I do not say that in every point there is unanimity between miners' work and the work of the artizans employed by the hon. Member for the Gorton Division; but it is certain that if we give an eight hours day to miners, it is certain that they will have much more time for looking after their families and for other occupations than that of mining; and in many parts of the country it would be an enormous addition to the miner's life. It is said that "eight hours" will raise wages. I know that it will have an excellent effect on the production and price of coal. The reserves of coal accumulated in the times when prices are low will enable an eight hours day to be kept up when the pressure is greater, and will prevent the fearful amount of overtime which is often worked in the collieries. I have always held that an eight hours day will be as self-acting as a pendulum. It resembles the governor of an engine, which, by peculiar revolutions, governs and regulates the speed of the engine and conduces to the safety of those who are working the engine. So with this eight hours day. It is the regular labour which will obtain over England with little exception if it is carried, and you will have a regularity of work which will keep prices steady and the workmen generally in good humour and good confidence, knowing that their lives are more elevated, and that they have more time, not only for recreation, but for thinking about other things than coal-mining. Our miners, after all, are a noble part of the population of England and Scotland, and the effect of such a Bill on their lives would be such as to surprise those who oppose it. As to short hours, that is what we are coming to, oppose it as you will. What is the use of listening to these long speeches from owners of collieries, great capitalists and philosophers? What is the use of listening to all these speeches when the progress of events is represented in this House in such a way by the mining constituencies that the force of numbers are on our side? Who is for us and who is against us? There are a number of Whig Baronets against us, and there are the owners of large mines in Durham and Northumberland, the large capitalists, and the political economists with their prejudices; and we have one or two Ministers against us. The opinions of these Ministers we respect, because we know they are founded not on motives of self-interest, but on real conviction. When you have to do with immaterial matters in commerce or finance, I do not object to some observance of the laws of political economy; but when you have to do with the lives of our workmen who in great masses are being treated as if they were subject to the rigid laws of political economy, then I must part company with political economists. When the life, health, and happiness of the miners or of any other artizans or labourers are in dispute, I say that the labour policy of the capitalists and of the Whig Baronets must go down; and as Parliament affirmed the principle of shorter hours of labour last year, it will affirm that principle again to-day and will surely carry it to-morrow.

Mr. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid) said that, in enumerating the persons who opposed this Bill, the noble Lord spoke about Baronets and capitalists, but he did not condescend to say that there were two or three Labour Representatives in the House who opposed this Bill.

Lord R. CHURCHILL said, he admitted fully the opposition from the Counties of Durham and Northumberland.

Mr. J. WILSON said, the noble Lord confessed his inability to follow the hon. Member for Leeds into the logical and philosophical argument he had advanced, and he hoped the noble Lord would excuse him if he said he was not quite able to follow the noble Lord in the argument he had attempted to put before the House. He quite agreed with the noble Lord that no effort should be spared to make the lives of the miners and of all workmen in the country brighter and better. But the difference between him and the noble Lord was that he believed it would be better for the men, and would increase the rapidity of their future progress if they depended upon their own efforts. No one would deny that he had made the most strenuous and persistent exertions in season and out of season to improve the life of the miners. But a Bill like the one before the House, which took the power out of the men's own hands and placed it in the hands of the House of Commons, would not encourage that feeling of independence among the working men which was so necessary. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion for the Second Reading charged the men of Durham and Northumberland with getting and keeping their short hours at the risk of the welfare of their boys. He would remind the House that in 1890 the boys in 132 collieries in Durham were working 11 hours a day. By an arrangement with the employers, arrived at by those methods of conciliation and compromise which he would substitute for legislation, an hour a day was deducted from the boys' work in the 132 collieries and half-an-hour from the men's work. Was there any man who would say that the men of Durham had not due and fitting regard for the welfare of the boys when they took off an hour a day from their work at the same time that they took half-an-hour off themselves? This Bill did not meet the cases which its Proposer seemed to think. The hon. Member talked about the exhaustion and about the cramped condition of the miner. He (Mr. Wilson) from his early boyhood worked at this exhausting labour in the most cramped condition that a miner could be put in. He had seen the danger and the darkness of the mine, and had found it was not a place of pleasant resort. It was a place to cure men of gout, because hard work would not allow men to have it. But he ventured to say that the Bill did not meet this case. If the Bill had taken cognisance of the exhausting nature of some part of the labour in mines, such as reducing the number of hours of working in cramped positions, it would have been well. It was unfair to Labour itself to say that a man who worked in the highest part of a pit, in comparatively fresh air, should have the same hours as the man who worked in a cramped position in the lower part of the mine. The hon. Gentleman said it was necessary for men to have leisure, and he said—for which he (Mr. Wilson) thanked the hon. Member —that he did not believe the men would misuse their leisure. He thought the records which the miners all over the country had shown, without regard to county or district, would prove that they had made as good use of the leisure afforded to them as any other class which could be quoted; but leisure in some cases was a relative term. If men were to have leisure they wanted energy to utilise that leisure. In order that the poor coal-getter might use his leisure properly it was necessary to arrange his hours so that his energy should not be thoroughly exhausted at the conclusion of his day's work. There were two modes of procedure before the House and the country. He said nothing about the number of miners for or against this proposal, and he did not intend to extenuate or to lessen the minority in the County of Durham in favour of eight hours, nor was he going to say that even in the district covered by the Miners' Federation there might not be a minority against the Bill; but that was kept in the background. The Federation ballot had not been taken so recently as that of the Organisation which he represented. There was, therefore, an uncertain element in the problem, but he thought it was fair to assume that if ideas differed in one district they would differ in others. They ought to cultivate, as far as they could, adherence to the Unions. It was best to implant into the minds of the workmen the idea of self-dependence. The best mode of procedure was on every question to bring employer and workmen together, and to allow them to settle not only wage questions, but everything that appertained to labour. He entirely agreed with the hon. Member for the Gorton Division (Mr. Mather), whose experience on the eight hours question every hon. Member might defer to, that the Conciliation Board had perfect trust in the chairman appointed by Mr. Speaker, and there was nothing to which the Board could fix its attention with so much advantage as this question of hours. There were a good many misapprehensions in regard to this Bill. There were a number of hon. Gentlemen who, though now voting for the Second Reading of this Bill, would not vote for its principle in Committe. He was very glad to hear the hon. Member for the Ince Division give that loud and emphatic "No, no" when the hon. Member for Leeds asked whether he would accept any modification in Committee.

MR. WOODS: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. I did not say "No, no," that the Miners' Federation would accept no modification; I said they would not accept the principle of local option.

MR. J. WILSON said, that what he wanted to point out was that a number of hon. Gentlemen would vote for this Bill, as they did last year, under the impression that it meant eight hours' work; but the Bill did not mean eight hours' work. It meant eight hours from bank to bank; but it was necessary to understand whether hon. Gentlemen who supported the Bill meant that the man's eight hours should be reckoned from the time he got into the cage until he came to bank again, or from the time he commenced to work in the face of the pit, because after getting down the shaft in many large mines in the North of England the men had to traverse a distance of three miles underground before they came to their working places, and by an arrangement with their employers an hour and a quarter was allowed for the men to travel the three miles each way. So that, instead of eight hours, that would mean five and a-half hours' work, reckoning eight hours from bank to bank. The noble Lord opposite had said that the matter was one of detail. But it was the principle of the Bill. He would ask the hon. Member for Ince if he would get up in his place and say he would accept a Bill which would give eight and a-half hours from bank to bank, and allow the men to work five and a-half hours on the face of the pit? Would the Miners' Federation accept a Bill with that modification? Hon. Members who were going to vote for the Bill must therefore make up their minds, because, if the promoters were true to their professions, they would wreck the Bill rather than accept any modification whatever. In support of his view that this matter should be left to a committee of employers and employed, he would read a quotation from a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham in 1892. The right hon. Gentleman was regarded as a powerful acquisition to the supporters of the Bill. He (Mr. Wilson) had, however, always looked upon that speech as being much more on the side of those who opposed the Bill than on that of its supporters. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I think it would not be fair to say that without adding that if the Bill gets in Committee now or at any time I hold myself at liberty to criticise the details, and in Committee perhaps to alter the Bill materially in the way of giving greater elasticity to its provisions. I believe there are differences in this trade, local differences, which deserve consideration. There are deep mines and shallow mines, mines of thick seams of coal and mines of thin seams. Mines in which the men have to go a long way to the face, and mines in which the working is close to the shaft; all these are differences which deserve consideration. Then, again, there is the question as to the different classes of labour in mines. I am told that in order that the hewers may work eight hours a day it is necessary that the drawers should work nine a day; and in order that the hewers and drawers may not be employed in working more than eight hours it will be necessary that the overseers and the winders and the people in charge of the machinery must work more than the maximum time. These are difficulties, but, at the same time, I do not for a moment believe that there are any difficulties which might not easily be got over by a practical committee of experts who are acquainted with the necessities of the trade."

That was the whole burden and point of the position—that the practice was so diversified in different counties and on different estates and in different mines, and the views of miners were so divergent, that it was impossible to secure uniformity. It had been said that engineering was more complicated than mining. Gentlemen who said that did not understand the complications of mines. Mines differed, but the engineering trade was the same all over the country. He agreed, however, that the matter would be best settled if referred to an expert committee of workmen and employers. There was no greater sign of the times than the tendency to shorten hours. *The Labour Gazette* showed that in every trade the hours of labour were being shortened, and the feeling of the time was such that if this Bill were withdrawn workmen and employers all over the country would set themselves to work to shorten the hours of those employed in mines, and to make arrangements to meet the diversity in the conditions of the various mines throughout the country. He was sorry that on this occasion the Government had sent out a five-line Whip. If there was one county which had been solid in its approval of the Government it was Durham, where 15 out of 16 Members were staunch and true to their Liberalism. So long as this was a contentious measure between North and South, it ought not to be made a Government measure. The opponents of the Bill had as much right to a five-line Whip as its supporters; but they had never asked for such support, and he hoped that no other Whip would be issued by the Government on this question. He asked his Trade Union friends whether this method of appealing to the House of Commons was not a confession of their own weakness? They possessed a strength which their fathers never had. They had power in their own hands, and to come to Parliament begging and beseeching was derogatory to their character as men. He wished to ask the Home Secretary how he would apply this Bill in a mine which employed 1,500 or 1,600 mem? He spoke from the point of view of the men and not from the capitalist point of view. What they wanted was practice. Everyone speaking there on behalf of the miners of Durham deserved to be listened to with sympathy. The miners deserved sympathy. They had a right to it. He (Mr. Wilson) wished to ask the Home Secretary a question. If he was prepared to interfere with the hours of labour of miners, was he prepared to go further? In 1886, when this question was brought forward at the Miners' Conference, it was strongly opposed—just as strongly as the proposal to regulate miners' wages would be opposed if it were brought forward now. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had said that, if there was before the House a question of fixing wages and hours, so much more was the wages question paramount to his mind that the question of hours might take second place.

*Sir C. W. DILKE: The hon. Member quotes me as though I am in favour of fixing wages by Act of Parliament. He will, perhaps, allow me to repudiate that view.

Mr. J. WILSON said, he would quote from an article by the right hon. Baronet in *The New Review.* The right hon. Baronet wrote this—

> "If, indeed, there were any suggestion that the State should deal directly with the question of wages or of subsistence, then this which would be a matter of life and death would take precedence even over hours, which are but secondary, however considerable in their importance."

*Sir C. W. DILKE: The context of those words will show that they do not imply that I am in favour of wages being fixed by the State. The hon. Member's interpretation of my words is contrary to everything I have ever written on the subject. I am not favourable to that principle.

Mr. J. WILSON said, that if the right hon. Baronet denied that he meant what he had said, of course he (Mr. Wilson) accepted his denial. He would ask the Home Secretary whether the Government had given their general sanction to the Bill, whether a Whip had been sent out in favour of the measure, and whether he would be good enough to go a little further and say how he would apply the Bill to a large colliery?

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham, S.) said, he would not deal with the principle of the Bill, but only with the objections in detail that had been taken to it. The hon. Member for Mid Durham had just asked how the Bill could be applied to a large colliery. The hon. Member must know that in nearly every mining district in England there was a fixed and recognised number of hours which constituted a day's work, and if the number was fixed by law at eight per day the internal arrangements of the mine could be quite easily adapted to that number. It would be just as easy to arrange for a day of eight hours as for a day of nine or 10 hours. In districts in which less than eight hours a day were worked of course the Bill would not apply, and therefore would not apply to the district of the hon. Member who moved the rejection, in which it was said the men only worked four and a-half hours a day. With regard to foreign competition, the hon. Baronet declared that the present average time worked by the miners of this country—not because they were not willing to work, as was implied by the hon. Member for Leeds, but because there was no more work for them to do—was under four days per week. Therefore, with the number of mines open at present and the number of men employed, five days of eight hours would be enough to meet the demand for coal. There was capital and labour enough in the country to supply any demand for coal that might arise in the future, and if it was said that we should have a supply of foreign coal he had a right to ask where it would come from? At the present moment this country was supplying every continental nation with coal because they could not raise enough, so it was ridiculous to talk of our being flooded with foreign coal. He advocated the Bill because it was better for Parliament as representing the people to wisely and judiciously do that which would otherwise require to be done by force. It was all very well to talk about Boards of Conciliation, but the last resort of the workmen in every case was a strike which such legislation as this would obviate. He hoped that the House would set the stamp and seal of its approval on the principle that legislation for the regulation of the hours of labour and, if necessary, for fixing a minimum wage, was a wiser and juster method of conducting industrial business than that which had hitherto prevailed.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): I think I am bound to state in a few sentences what is the position of the Government and what are my own views in reference to this Bill. So far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, their position to-day was exactly what it was a year ago, when it was defined in the Debate on the Second Reading of this Bill by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian. A very considerable majority of the Members of the Government are in favour of this Bill, and will, I believe, support the Motion for the Second Reading, but there are some of our colleagues, for whose opinion and authority we entertain the highest respect, who take a different view. They will, I doubt not, give effect to that view, if not in Debate, at any rate in the Division. The Government, as a Government, has not introduced the Bill, or taken charge of it, or made itself responsible for its fortunes. So far as I am personally concerned, I heartily support its principle, and trust the House will adopt it. The question is one in which, as the course of the Debate has shown, the divisions of opinion do not follow the ordinary lines of Party controversy. A considerable number of hon. Gentlemen opposite share the views of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, while some hon. Members who sit immediately behind the Treasury Bench are strong and formidable opponents of this legislation. I cannot help regretting that a certain amount of heat has been imported into this discussion by the imputation of motives. No one who has listened to the speech of the hon. Baronet behind me (Sir J. Pease), or to the very remarkable and most powerful speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham (Mr. J. Wilson), can have any doubt as to the genuineness and reality of the feeling which exists in their parts of the country, or can suppose that that feeling springs from interested motives, and is not the outcome of honest convictions. I think that in their turn hon. Members opposite might give credit to those who support this Bill, and to those who are going to vote for the Second Reading, that they are not actuated by any desire to catch votes or any paltry electoral consideration. On the other hand, I think equal credit might be given to the supporters of the Bill, and that we need not have our conduct interpreted as a design to catch votes and to make political capital. As far as I am concerned, I can briefly explain the grounds on which I support this Bill. I look upon it as an attempt to establish by law for all persons engaged in this industry the maximum of time they shall be employed underground. There has not been a dissentient voice raised in the course of the Debate to the proposition that eight hours underground, whether spent in actual hewing, getting of coal or not, is as long a period as is consistent with a healthy existence. To that proposition I have not heard a demurring voice. Nor is it disputed—and this, to my mind, is a most important element in the consideration of the question—that the vast majority of the 680,000 odd persons—I do not go into precise figures—engaged in this trade are in favour of the statutory limitation of the hours of labour. Further, Sir, it cannot be disputed, after the admissions which have been frankly made by those who have opposed the Bill from the County of Durham, that voluntary effort has proved ineffectual to carry out that which is admittedly the wish of the great part of the mining population, and believed by them to be in their own interest and in the interests of the community. The hon. Member who recently addressed the House has practically acknowledged that that is the case. It is true that in Northumberland and Durham the hewers are not engaged for anything like eight hours. I believe a very considerable number of them do not average more than six or six and a half hours at the outside. But there is the case of the boys, and when I say boys I do not mean necessarily those who are under 16 years of age. I mean those who are not actually engaged in hewing, but who work underground. As we have been told, only three and a-half years ago in the great majority of the collieries in Durham these boys were engaged for 11 hours a day. The hon. Member takes great credit for the power of voluntary organisation. He boasts that they have succeeded in that county in reducing the 11 hours to 10 hours, while they have at the same time reduced the hours of men I say that is a most conclusive proof that voluntary organisation, excellent a thing as it is within the limits of its powers, is insufficient for the purpose aimed at in this Bill. This great and powerful voluntary organisation, led by men like my hon. Friend, whose interest in producing a humaner life among the colliery workers we all admit, although it has been in existence all these years, has not succeeded in reducing the hours of the labour of the boys more than from 11 to 10 hours underground. That is to say, by their own account they have not succeeded in doing that which ought to have been done and which they would have done if they had had the power—a power which it is the object of this Bill to give them. It is said, and it always will be said, that it is a novel principle for the State to interfere with the labour of grown men. I will not at present go into that question, but the whole history of factory and mining legislation shows that this principle has been over and over again adopted. In point of principle, the whole position was given away when the factory legislation was first adopted. It was first adopted in an experimental manner, but since then it has received at the hands of both Parties great development in recent years. The Member for Durham asked me the question how I should apply—how I should enforce this Bill, if it was passed into law.

MR. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid.) said, he did not mean to ask as to enforcing it. He meant applying it to the working of a mine.

MR. ASQUITH : That appears to be one of the details, but I will point out to my hon. Friend that eight hours a day already exists in the majority of the mines of this country, and all these details in the working of these mines have already been solved.

MR. J. WILSON : No.

MR. ASQUITH : Well, I say there is a vast number—I believe I might say a majority—of these mines in which no man is at work underground—no hewer of coal, at least—for more than eight hours. In point of fact, some of those whose work is in long distance mines in proximity to the shaft are not underground for that length of time. So that I say the matter to which my hon. Friend refers has been practically solved. It has been said in the course of the Debate that the effect of this legislation will be to raise the price of coal, because a statutory reduction in the hours of labour increases the cost of production. I was present yesterday with the Prime Minister when a deputation of coal-owners appeared in opposition to this Bill. They used that argument, and I asked this question—whether 20 years ago the men in the Yorkshire collieries did not work longer than they do to-day, and the colliery-owner to whom I put the question admitted that that was so. I asked him whether the output was not greater then than it was now, and he replied that it was not. So that the reduction of the hours of labour has been found consistent with even an increase of the output. No one acquainted with the industry will dispute that that increase and that reduction have gone on side by side. I will give the House one single figure which I noticed in the statistics forwarded by the Inspectors of Mines. The average for the 10 years of 1883-92 showed an increase in coal production of 30 millions of tons over the 10 years 1873-82. I do not deny, of course, that there has been an increase of men and boys ; it is only right to say that ; but this increase is side by side with the decrease in the number of hours which the men work. Therefore, if we are to judge of the future by the past, I do not fear that the introduction of this principle will lead to a decline in the production. The Bill will, in fact, merely give legislative sanction to what already exists. I do not believe that the Bill will diminish the quantity of coal or increase the price. As I have said, I do not attempt to discuss the details of the Bill. It is of the simplest possible character. I think the details are matters which may be left to the Committee. I do not understand that the promoters take up the attitude of "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." They do not decline to listen to reasonable proposals. On the contrary, I understand that they are perfectly ready to listen to any reasonable suggestions. I will only mention one point of detail of some importance, in which I certainly could not concur in its present form. I cannot think that it would be right that the penalty for contravening the Bill should fall on the employer alone. I think that, if by Statute you intervene in this matter, those who violate the law should be made equally liable for the consequences. This Debate has been conducted on the general principle, and for the reasons I have stated I, for one, and for a large majority of my colleagues, give my support most heartily to the Second Reading of the Bill.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said, the Debate had been conducted on both sides in the interests of limited classes. Speeches had been delivered by Representatives of employers and workmen. But there was another class to be considered. Very little had been said in the interest of the consumers. He could hardly think that sufficient justification had been shown by the right hon. Gentleman for the momentous decision he had given. The House ought to be well persuaded of a good ground for what was neither more nor less than the protection of one class. They ought to consider the effect of that protection on all the other classes and industries of the country, and the question ought to be argued on broad grounds, free from selfish considerations. It was not sufficient to give as a reason for this far-reaching proposal that it was supported by a majority of the industry concerned. There were other occupations as unhealthy and laborious as that of the coal miners, and it would surely require very strong grounds to induce the House to specially protect one class. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington argued that there were 400,000 men who supported the Bill; but there was no proof of that. At a recent Conference those who voted for the Bill did not represent more than 200,000 miners; and only two years ago at Liverpool there was an absolute majority against the eight hours principle. A large majority of the men had expressed no opinion, and a considerable minority had expressed strong opinions against the Bill. What the right hon. Gentleman was supporting was an altogether novel principle applying to adult labour, without any attempt being made to establish adequate grounds for accepting the views of a so-called majority of the trade. The provisions were to be enforced in the ordinary way, so that it was to be made a criminal offence for a man to use his labour to the best advantage; and for a man to avail himself of his greater strength or ability was to become punishable by law. A greater invasion of private liberty and right had never been attempted. If it was thought that 10 hours was too long for boys to work in mines, it would be perfectly easy to extend the Factories Acts to cover their case, but it was no ground for limiting the labour of all adult miners, and forbidding them, whether they liked it or not, to work more than eight hours a day. The real danger of this proposal, no one could doubt, would be that it would increase the cost of production and so diminish wages. The Lancashire miners the other day passed a resolution urging that the output of coal should be limited, that the men should only work four days per week and eight hours a day, and that no miner should be allowed to earn more than 6s. a day. That was to say, that the best workman was to be kept down to the position of the worst. He was much surprised to find that the Secretary to the Board of Trade was reported to have told the Miners' National Union that they should do as much as possible to keep up prices. If that was the great object of the colliers, how could the House consent to this legislation? During the great stagnation of trade many industries had been earning very small profits, and works had been kept on with great difficulty. An industry representing a capital of £100,000,000 sterling had made, on an average, for years past 3 per cent. profit. To increase the cost of production would undoubtedly lead to their being closed, and to a diminution of the wages of their workpeople. Was it tolerable—was it reasonable for Her Majesty's Government to propose that this powerful coal organisation, which could do so much to limit its own hours of labour, should be encouraged to take the further step of artificially enhancing the prime cost of production? The movement was in restraint of trade and inimical to the best interests of the country. Foreign competition made it necessary that our manufactories should produce at the cheapest possible rates, and this was not the time when the House ought to give legislative support to a proposal of so momentous and extraordinary a character. It was no vision but the actual fact, that foreign nations, especially France and Germany, had made enormous advances in competition. We had now less than half the total export of coal abroad, though it still amounted to 38,000,000 tons. We were being met in the markets of the world, especially in the East, by new sources of production, and when we were being undersold by foreign competitors, this was not the time to bring forward a measure of this description.

Mr. WOODS: I move, Sir, that the Question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not the half-hour yet.

Sir J. FERGUSSON said, he had no wish to talk out the Bill or to take any mean advantage of the hon. Member, and concluded his remarks by urging the

House, in the interest of the great industries of the country, not to assent to a proposal of this abnormal and extraordinary character.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) rose to move the adjournment of the Debate, but at the same moment——

Mr. ROBY rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now" stand part of the Question."

The House divided :—Ayes 281; Noes 194.—(Division List, No. 34.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) BILL. (No. 171.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which he said was only to assimilate the law of Scotland to the law of England, and was supported by all Parties for giving power to Town Councils to adopt the Public Libraries Act.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Dalziel.*)

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, last year it was found necessary at the Irish Office to recast an Irish Bill for the same purpose.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, the Bill in no way invalidated the proceedings which at present would be taken under the Public Libraries Act. Its object was simply to assimilate the law of Scotland to that of England, and it imposed no additional rate.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 147.)

Read the third time, and passed.

COMMONS BILL.—(No. 39.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Third Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

WAYS AND MEANS—FINANCE BILL.

Resolution [24th April] reported, and agreed to.—[See page 1229.]

Ordered, That it be a further Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill upon the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 17th instant, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 190.]

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &C. (JOINT COMMITTEE).

Lords Message [24th April] requesting this House to nominate an additional Member to the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills, for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill, considered.

Ordered, That the Select Committee [appointed by this House to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills] do consist of Seven Members.

Ordered, That Sir Edward Hill be added to the Committee for the consideration of the Merchant Shipping Bill.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to acquaint them that this House has nominated an additional Member to the Committee, as requested by the Lords.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked what would be the course of Business, and whether any statement would be made to-morrow?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. T. E. ELLIS, Merionethshire) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would to-morrow make a statement with regard to the Business for next week. The Motion for the appointment of a Scotch Grand Committee would be further considered at the Morning Sitting on Friday.

House adjourned at two minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 26th April 1894.

INDIA (LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS).

ADDRESS FOR A RETURN.

Viscount CROSS: My Lords, I see the Under Secretary of State for India in his place, and I desire to ask him whether he will lay before this House a Return which has been presented to the other House of Parliament, showing the composition of the several Legislative Councils in India, and comprising extracts from or copies of Papers showing the Regulations made under the India Councils Act, 1892, and the method by which those Regulations have been carried into effect in the several Provinces having Legislative Councils? This, my Lords, is a matter of considerable importance and of great interest, and I hope, therefore, the noble Lord will have no objection to some Return being made to this House, as has been already made in the other House of Parliament.

Address for—

"Return, showing the composition of the several Legislative Councils in India, and extracts or copies of papers showing the Regulations made under Section 1, Sub-section (4), of 'The Indian Councils Act, 1892,' and the methods by which these Regulations have been carried into effect in the several Provinces having Legislative Councils." —(*The Viscount Cross.*)

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord Reay)**: There is no objection to the Return which has been presented to the other House of Parliament being presented to your Lordships' House on the Motion of the noble Viscount.

Address agreed to.

LAW OF INHERITANCE AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 14.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell): My Lords, the Bill which I now ask your Lordships to read a second time will need very little explanation from me, inasmuch as it is not a measure which is new to this House, but has been already more than once under your consideration. When I introduced a Bill having the same object during the course of the last Session it was in a form, I believe, substantially the same as that of the Bill which I now present to your Lordships; but some resistance was offered with regard to the form and shape of the Bill, which, in my opinion, rendered it desirable to exclude the possibility of all such considerations on a future occasion. The Bill, therefore, which I now ask your Lordships to read a second time is really in the exact form in which the proposed change in the law was embodied in the Bill which was introduced into this House by my noble and learned Predecessor in the late Government in 1889. As regards the form of the Bill, therefore, I imagine that no exception will be taken to it on the present occasion, and that all I need deal with now is its scope and object. My Lords, the matter has been frequently made the subject of discussion, and more than once the opinion of the other House has been expressed in its favour. The proposal is simply this: that in case of a person dying intestate, the disposition of his property made by the law should be the same, whether his property be real estate or personal estate. My Lords, the object of the proposed change is this: The disposition which the law makes of a man's personal estate is, I apprehend, solely because it is thought to be as near as can be judged, taking the general run of cases, the kind of disposition which a man acting reasonably would himself have made. The Bill does not propose to touch the power of disposition by any owner of his estate; after the Bill passes he may dispose of it, whether by will or settlement precisely as at present. It will touch no estate except one the owner of which has not made a disposition of it for himself. Now, my Lords, is the present law a reasonable one? Does it make a reasonable and just disposition, as far as the law can do so, in cases of intestacy? Under the present law if a man dies intestate possessed of real estate the whole of it goes to his eldest son, and no provision whatever is made for his widow and younger children. The object of the present Bill is to remedy what is regarded by many as an injustice and an evil. The case in favour of this Bill seems to me to be put in a nutshell by the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition—he states it in a single sentence, as I will read to your Lordships from the records of the House—

> "The law did not make for intestates at present the kind of will which most people would be anxious to make, because very few would wish to leave the whole of their property to one son."

That is, in a sentence, the principle of this Bill as expressed by the noble Marquess in regard to the measure of 1889. And, again, he says—

> "The Bill would in the case of small estates prevent great injustice; and it is in regard to small estates and among the less educated classes that the existing law was likely to come into operation."

Really those sentences of the noble Marquess contain the substance of the whole of my argument in support of this Bill. If it is true that the passing of the Bill would be likely to prevent great injustice or to a disposition in these cases more nearly approaching that which a just man would be likely to make, it seems to me that the case for the Bill is made out. I quite agree that it would be a very serious matter to touch the power of disposition—to prevent a man making such a disposition of his property as he pleases; but that is not in the slightest degree the question your Lordships have to consider to-day; the only question here is, where there is no such disposition what ought the law to provide? Now, the law as it at present exists was not really the result of the deliberate action of Parliament, or even of a consideration of the question by our ancestors, under any state of circumstances or conditions similar to those which exist at the present day. In truth, my Lords, the present law is a historical survival; it is connected distinctly with the feudal system; but it must be recollected that, under the present feudal system, the law in its operation was not as unjust as it is at the present day. In those days the person who owned the estate held originally from the Crown, and was obliged to bear considerable burdens. He had, in consideration of his holding certain property, to provide a certain military force, and to perform certain military services; and those who are familiar with the writings upon that subject will know that it was the practice in those days for the son who came into possession of the estate not to consider himself without obligation to the rest of the family. In addition to that, the widow under that law became entitled to one-third as her dower; and in addition to the obligations upon the eldest son coming into the estate the younger children had to be provided for; he not only had to bear considerable burdens on his own part, but he had to make provision for the younger members of his family; one would perhaps be put into the Church, and another in command of the forces which had to be raised upon the property. So that the operation of this law cannot be said to have been at all the same as at present, and the injustice of such a disposition of property was at the time largely mitigated. But, my Lords, the condition of things has become much changed. In the present day—and the practice has been increasing of late years—the working classes have very largely been induced to invest their savings in the purchase of cottages and houses. The number of people who possess their own houses has largely increased. I believe that the country has derived very great benefit indeed from the fact that so many people have put their savings into land and buildings. In that way they have become landowners, and that fact tends very much to the stability of property. The result has undoubtedly been beneficial. But then you have in this class a number of persons with whom intestacy is by no means uncommon or unlikely to happen; and in cases where a man leaves behind only two or three houses of which he has become the owner, the whole of his savings go to the one son, and the wife and younger children are left absolutely without provision. As I have already said, in old times the wife would have been entitled to her dower; but owing to difficulties of title arising from the existence of rights of dower, a practice came into existence which proved very unfortunate in all cases of succession, of barring such rights to dower. So that the wife may be said for many years past to have had no dower in cases where land has been purchased in that way.

Therefore, as I have pointed out, the result has been that whilst you have a number of small proprietors created, you have, in the case of those persons who die intestate, no provision for the wife or children. That, my Lords, is, I think, an extremely undesirable state of things, and points to the injustice referred to by the noble Marquess in the speech to which I have referred. It has been suggested that there are very few of those cases of intestacy, and that there is no grievance to be remedied. It is, of course, a difficult thing to ascertain the number of cases in which people possessed of real estate die intestate. There are no means, as far as I am aware of, of arriving at the figures with regard to it. It is certain that a great number of people die intestate; that, of course, may be taken positively to be the fact, and is capable of easy proof. But whether those persons who die intestate were owners of real property is not capable of proof, because there is no method by which it would become publicly known. But there is no reason to suppose that those who are possessed of small portions of land less frequently die intestate than those possessed of personalty only. There is, I think, some evidence in the contrary direction. The subject pressed itself very much on my notice when I was a Law Officer from 1880 to 1885. Your Lordships are, of course, aware that when a man dies intestate, without leaving any relatives—which happens rarely except in cases of illegitimacy—the property escheats to the Crown; but it has been the practice to entertain appeals made to the Treasury by blood relations, though not recognised by law, and to consider what portion, if any, of the property should be given up to them. Those cases all come before the Law Officers for advice. In every year several cases came before me in which men had died intestate, leaving some estate, generally real property. Is there any reason to suppose that they would be less likely to make wills than the rest of the community? Certainly not—quite the contrary; because it is difficult to suppose that a man who has been looking after and taking care of those who are his relations, in life, would desire that they should get nothing and the Crown take all upon his death. Yet I cannot conceive that they are more likely to make wills than the rest of the community, and if there be such cases as I have alluded to every year of persons dying intestate who are illegimate, it surely tends strongly to show that the total number of cases in which persons owning real property do not make wills must be very considerable. It has been said that in the present day it is easy to make a will, and that nobody has any excuse for not making one. That may be perfectly true; and yet, after all, a great number of people do not make wills, and how does that come about? Well, in all classes, one may say, there is a tendency in human nature to put off that which we think we can do at any time. People are prone to consider the hour of their departure from the world as not near at hand; they think there will be ample time to make a will, and consequently no people who have any idea or notion of doing so, nevertheless, having made no will, die intestate. Especially is this likely to be the case with those who are not of the rank of your Lordships, but in humbler stations of life. It is a serious matter to them to incur the burden of a lawyer's bill, so that the class with regard to whom the present law operates most hardly in the case of intestacy is just the class who are most likely to die intestate. That was the view adopted by the noble Marquess when he said that it was in the case of owners of the smaller estates and the least educated class that the existing law was more likely to come into operation. I entirely concur in the view so expressed. I do not intend to trouble your Lordships with further observations on this Bill. I regret to see that the noble Duke is about to make objections. Of course, if this Bill only dealt with those who are in the position of your Lordships, I admit it would not be necessary at all. I imagine the number of those who sit in this House and who succeed to estates by reason of intestacy is extremely small. Everybody will admit that large estates pass, as a general rule, either by will or by settlement. The class who will be beneficially affected by the proposed change in the law are not those represented in your Lordships' House, but those in much humbler stations of life. Now I would ask your Lordships seriously to pause before you reject a measure which had the sanction of the late Government, and which, therefore, cannot be said to be in any sense a Party measure, from any considerations that it would be likely to affect, though, as I venture to suggest, erroneously, any Members of this House. I submit that it is our bounden duty, and only wisdom, to look at the matter as it touches the sentiments of the people at large. When this measure was before your Lordships in 1889 one noble Lord suggested that it would be well to wait until such a measure came up to us from the other House, and on that occasion, I think, the noble Marquess opposite or the noble Earl (Lord Cranbrook) strongly protested against that view, and pointed out that we ought in this House to take notice of altered circumstances and the changing tendencies and currents of thought, and that we ought not to be forced into reform by the stimulus of measures coming from the other House. It would be most unfortunate if we should seem in 1894 to be even less prepared than we were in 1889 to make this desirable change in the law. For these reasons I ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK rose to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. The noble and learned Lord had expressed regret that this notice had been given, and had pointed out that the Bill would not disastrously affect any Member of that House. In taking that step he was not animated by any fear that their Lordships would not be able to take such measures as they might think best to protect themselves. The difficulty, however, in dealing with the question appeared to be that every argument which could be brought to bear in favour of the proposed change seemed to be effectually counterbalanced by other arguments which told in an opposite direction. It must be remembered that the measure reversed what had been for centuries the settled law of the country, and probably many of their Lordships had come to listen to what was the great need for so momentous a change. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack had completely failed to bring forward any kind of proof that the existing law was responsible in any large degree for cases of hardship, and there was no possible state of the law which might not, in particular instances, produce some hardship. The noble and learned Lord told them that in the past the law did not work unfairly, because when real estate was left or devolved upon an eldest son he invariably understood his responsibility, and took care that his family did not suffer any hardship. But no attempt had been made to show that eldest sons in the present day were less true to their responsibilities than the eldest sons of a past generation. That being so, their Lordships might very well consider that until some tangible case had been made out there was no occasion to alter the existing law. There was, besides, a widespread danger which had to be looked in the face if this Bill was carried. Of recent years the Legislature had been very anxious to encourage people to possess real property and to increase the number of small owners of land in the country. If these small owners invested everything they had in land and did not make any will, then the difficulty of which the Lord Chancellor had spoken would arise; but, on the other hand, by the proposed change the whole policy of the Legislature in this direction would be defeated. This, again, was the same point in another form. In the case of small holdings the law would step in, and it was clear the same thing might occur *ad infinitum* on the death of persons leaving small properties behind them. That would cause considerable difficulty, and would raise a great question how property so situated should be disposed of, and some day their Lordships might have to come down to that House and provide some effectual and far-reaching machinery to deal with that difficulty. It had been said that a Bill which tended to break up large estates was for the encouragement of small holdings, but he could not admit that was the case. Large estates would continue to grow, while the small holdings would pass away. Was it so clear that people wished small properties to go in that way, and did they dread so much as had been represented real estate passing into the hands of one holder? The tendency of the public mind on the subject was shewn by what was going on in Kent, where the custom of gavelkind was not found to be popular, and was quickly passing away. If their Lordships thought, on the whole, it was well to encourage the creation of small estates in land, then it certainly seemed undesirable to make the change in the law contemplated by the present Bill. It had been asked what does it signify, and it had been urged that if people desired to proceed in this way they could always do it—that, in fact, they could dodge the law by making wills. He did not think it was desirable that the law should be set at variance with custom in this matter, and he was opposed to any change unless good cause was shown for it. Did they or did they not wish that the policy of keeping large estates in the hands of single owners should be perpetuated? Of course, he quite understood that some noble Lords, who thought the system based on primogeniture an evil, would take an opposite view in this matter; but he trusted that the knowledge possessed of what went on at present and of public feeling as regarded the present custom, would induce them not to make the proposed change. No doubt there was much to be said on both sides, but the burden of proof lay with those who asked their Lordships to take a step which, once taken, could not be retraced, and he therefore asked the House to pause before assenting to the principle of this Bill, and to support the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Duke of Norfolk.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: As the noble and learned Lord was kind enough to allude to me, I shall do what I should not otherwise have done—that is, follow my noble Friend. The noble and learned Lord appears to imagine that when a great and large scheme is produced before the House he is at liberty to take one particular clause out of that scheme, neglecting and putting aside all the rest, and to say to us, "You are bound to assent to the fragmentary clause, because you assented to the scheme as a whole." I cannot admit that argument at all. This clause was introduced into the Bill of 1889 for the purpose, as we were told by the lawyers, of making a necessary change of machinery essential to the working of the larger scheme—a scheme which we thought would be highly beneficial both to the public at large and to the owners of landed property. But it is not merely that the noble and learned Lord has taken one particular circumstance out of a large scheme and asked us to adopt it by itself without any consideration of the other provisions which might modify or qualify its action. He has taken no notice of sundry differences of circumstance which attach to that proposal and to the proposal which he makes. At the time when that Bill was dropped we had introduced provisions to meet what, from the point of view of the larger proprietors, is the great danger and evil of the noble Lord's scheme. I entirely admit that for all educated men it matters very little, as a rule, whether this law or the other as to intestacy shall prevail, because their estates pass almost invariably by settlement or by will. But there is a case when they cannot pass by settlement or by will, and that is the case where the tenant for life is incapacitated from making any settlement or will—where the tenant for life is an infant or an idiot or a lunatic. There is nothing in the provisions of the Bill which in such a case will in the future save an estate from being divided or broken up.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): Nor was there in the Bill of the noble Marquess.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: We had introduced some clauses at the time the Bill was dropped, and it had been fully announced that it was our intention to make that point safe before the Bill passed into law. The noble and learned Lord behind me (Lord Halsbury) brought up two clauses for the purpose. It would be a very serious hardship in many a case where, though it is the sense of the whole family that the estate should pass to the eldest son, yet, in spite of that general consent, it is broken up by the Statute of Distributions, because the heir who would inherit under this Bill is a man who, being an infant or being a lunatic, is incapable of making a will. It seems to me that is a great hardship, and no Bill for this purpose whatever can be accepted which does not make provision for that danger. But there are other circumstances which have changed, of which the noble Lord took no account. He told us that the great hardship in cases of intestacy was that the wife and the younger children were left entirely unprovided for. I think, in the case of the uneducated class—the poor class—with respect to whom the question of intestacy almost exclusively arises, the great and the most serious hardship certainly is in the case of the wife. There is no doubt that intestacy which leaves her entirely without provision is a very serious hardship indeed. I am not saying that the younger children are entirely without cause of complaint, but they, at all events, have usually means of making their way in the world, and they do not necessarily trust to such provision for their support. But for the wife the hardship is great indeed. Since the date of the Bill to which the noble Lord referred there has passed and become law a Bill by which, if an estate, real and personal together, does not exceed £500 and there are no children, that passes to the wife. Therefore a great evil, one of the great injustices which the noble Lord pointed out, is already prevented by a Statute which has passed since that time. That is not the only change in the law that has taken place. There is another change which, to my mind, is most significant and important. In 1891 Parliament, departing from all the old traditions and lessons of State craft in that respect, passed, for reasons which I think exceedingly good, measures for encouraging the purchase and ownership of small estates by poor men, by men of the working class. I regard that as a very salutary measure if it can be brought into operation—a very salutary measure, not so much for the benefit of the men themselves, although I think it will be beneficial to them, but beneficial to the public as rendering a much larger class of people interested in landed property and in the general security of property and the institutions of the country. That is a measure which I heartily hope may ultimately bear fruit. I am well aware that no such measure can bear fruit immediately. Some time must elapse before it is brought to the knowledge of those whom it concerns; some time must elapse before they can be drawn away from their old habits in that respect, and can be induced to undertake a manner of life which to many of them is entirely new. But if it can be done it will be an achievement of which the Parliament of 1891 may well be proud. But what are you doing now? There is no doubt that this is the very class who are most likely to be intestate. They are to a very great extent, though happily to a diminishing extent, an uneducated class, and they are more likely than any other to omit to make their wills. If they do not make their wills, and this Bill passes, the land which by so much trouble, and even at so much cost, has been made into a peasant proprietary must be sold. There is no other way of dividing its value among the family, and therefore, as fast as by the operation of the law of 1891 you are creating peasant properties which you have determined to be of great value to the people and to the country, so by this law as fast as these proprieties are left intestate will they be sold in order that the value may be divided among the family, and they will be lapped up by the great estates near them. That seems to me to be a most irrational policy. There is no call for this Bill; there is no great grievance which demands it; therefore there is no reason why you should not allow this great experiment, which you have resolved to try a fair time, to be put to the test of experience so that we may know whether it will succeed or fail. Do not strike down the plant you have put into the ground, and to which you have given so much care, before it has been two years growing. You are reversing, in effect, the policy of the Parliament of 1891; you are destroying a great benefit to the institutions of the country which you congratulated yourselves would result in increasing the number of peasant properties. As fast as you create peasant properties by that Act, you diminish them by the operation of this Bill, and therefore it appears to me that the Motion of the noble and learned Lord is inopportune, that it is demanded by no great public advantage, that it is not needed to remedy any great known public evil, and that it will diminish one of the most valuable and one of the most hopeful reforms ever passed by Parliament.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, I have listened with great attention to the speech of the noble Duke and the noble Marquess in the hope of finding out some intelligible basis for the rejection of the moderate and reasonable proposal of my noble and learned Friend. I confess I have met with some disappointment. My noble Friend the noble Duke, whom I always hear with such pleasure both here and in another place, set forth with great moderation the reasons which animated him on this occasion. He said there was no apprehension on behalf of the large properties in which your Lordships are supposed to be mainly interested, because your Lordships will be able and willing to make testamentary dispositions. We then come to the smaller class who, I supposed, so far as they are possessed of intelligence and education, would be equally willing to make testamentary dispositions to guide the disposal of their property after their death, because the noble Duke will not forget that, however small the property, it is not the less precious to the peasant proprietor than his own possessions. As we, therefore, may take it for granted that both the large and the small proprietor who possess intelligence and education will provide for the disposition of their property after death, we have to look for some further and more remote reason for the rejection of this Bill. That reason appears to be the case of the illiterate small holder, and I am bound to say that I am not aware that any want of education is always accompanied by any want of consideration for the main chance and the care of property. We are then, to come to the argument that the illiterate small holders—I do not know how many there are, but there cannot be a great number—are the persons whom it is desirable to protect in this way. The noble Marquess disregards altogether any apprehension to be based on the risk of leaving the widow unprovided for. He says that a recent measure has provided for the widow in cases of property which amounts to £500 and less, but in his argument he entirely overlooked any consideration arising in regard to the younger children of the illiterate proprietor. We are narrowing down the issue exceedingly close. It therefore come to this—that the noble Marquess is making his protest against the Bill, not on behalf of any large or considerable class, not on behalf of any abstract principles of justice, but on behalf of the eldest son of the illiterate peasant proprietor. Now, I venture to say that is an exceedingly narrow ground to go upon. The noble Marquess spurns his own Bill. He says—"You take a principle out of my Bill, but it is unaccompanied by a valuable provision which would have protected us against the evil provisions of my own Bill." I do not know how far we are bound never to consider any clause in any Bill apart from the other provisions which accompany it; but that is the naked and intelligible proposition. But if the present proposal is a bad or unjust one, I will not pay the noble Marquess the bad compliment of supposing that he would have consented to include it in his Bill on that occasion. On the last occasion when the Bill was before your Lordships' House the noble Marquess said he did not exactly know the safeguards with which it would be accompanied, because his legal conscience was at that moment at San Remo; but I am glad to see that that legal conscience is now present, and the noble and learned Lord (Lord Halsbury) has supplied the fact that by two invaluable clauses he would have diminished the evil effect of the Bill which he had himself introduced. Now, my Lords, I venture to think that, in dealing with so large a principle as this, incorporated by Her Majesty's late Advisers in a Bill of their own, you must go on much broader grounds than have been advanced by either the noble Duke or the noble Marquess for the rejection of this Bill. What I greatly fear is that the reasons that have been given for its rejection will not be taken by the public at large to be the real reasons that animate you on this occasion. They will not believe in the self-denying declaration that it is not on account of your own properties that you are unwilling to pass this Bill. They will not, I fear, give credit to the phantom of the unhappy eldest son of the illiterate peasant proprietor; but I am afraid they will suspect some deeper and larger motive, with a view to prevent the assimilation of the law with respect to the disposition in cases of intestacy of real and personal property. There is one argument I have omitted which I admit has some weight. The noble Marquess said there was one class that would not be covered by this Bill, and upon whom some injustice might be worked—the class of infants and lunatics. But that is not a reason for rejecting the Bill; it is a matter for Committee and further consideration. If the noble Marquess brings forward any clause dealing with that particular aspect of the matter—either the two invaluable clauses which seem to have lapsed into oblivion or any other clause which he thinks more fitted to redress the evil he has himself proposed—I can assure him that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to give it their best consideration. I must say that I think this is a larger question than either the noble Duke or the noble Marquess has professed to think it. It is, perhaps, a principle which has not a very large operation, but it is one of those principles which in the abstract, at any rate, appeal with great force of justice to the public mind of the country. If, then, your Lordships think the Bill will—even if it should have no great operation—if you believe that in the main any evil such as is apprehended in consequence of the act of any illiterate proprietor may be averted—I would implore you not to put yourselves before the country this evening in the position of once more resisting the establishment of the simple and rational principle involved in this proposal. Last year it was only by three, four, or five votes that you rejected a Bill for the abolition of what is popularly called primogeniture. I do not know to what figure the majority may be swollen on this occasion, but if it be 20 times greater than that of last year, I do not believe that you will be acting wisely in the interests either of this House, of your own order, or of the land, of which you are the special protectors, in repeating the course you then pursued.

Lord HALSBURY: My Lords, I propose to add a very few words of comment on what has just been said by the Prime Minister. But before I come to the particular matters to which he has called attention, I cannot but say that one becomes a little sick of the constant veiled threat that your Lordships ought not to do what you think right, as it may be supposed by the public you are acting in the interests of the class to which you belong. I think we are tolerably familiar now with the kind of peroration which warns your Lordships that yourselves and your House will be endangered if you act according to what you believe to be right, and do not at once comply with any popular demand. The noble Earl opposite might, I think, have foregone his sneer at the "invaluable clauses" he has referred to as having lapsed into oblivion. I am not aware that they were invaluable clauses; but with regard to their having lapsed into oblivion, I may tell the noble Lord that it was because of an apparent imperfection in those clauses that the measure failed. It was the absence of a sufficient belief in the minds of noble Lords in the efficacy of the Bill in providing sufficiently for the cases of infants and lunatics which caused the Bill to be withdrawn at the last stage in consequence of the opposition it received.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: I do not wish to interrupt the noble and learned Lord. I only wish to say that I used the expression "oblivion" not in any sneering spirit, but because I observed that he himself had to remind the noble Marquess of their existence.

Lord HALSBURY: It is not worth while pursuing the matter, but I used the term "sneering" as applying not to the clauses having fallen into oblivion, but to their valuable character.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: They were stated to be invaluable to the Bill.

Lord HALSBURY: On the contrary, they caused the wrecking of the Bill. However, these matters seem to me to be hardly worth the dignity of a discussion. What I said in introducing the Bill originally I adhere to. I think no words of mine will be found recommending this principle for itself; on the contrary, I think it will be found that I said the provision was not of much importance, and that all that need be said on the subject was, that for the purpose of securing what appeared to me to be undoubtedly of great importance, the establishment of universal registration in this country, and so rendering the tranfer of land more easy and inexpensive, one would be willing to drop the principle brought in as regarded the law of inheritance and leaving the law as it then existed, for all property to be divided according to the Statute of Distributions, whether it was realty or personalty. But it never occurred to me that, for the purpose of getting that measure carried, owners of land and the country generally should be subjected to a change in the law of inheritance. One was not committed to vote for it in that naked form, and under conditions which would not have made it acceptable to the community. I have not the least hesitation in voting for the Amendment of the noble Duke, because I think the matter as now brought forward is not one of great importance in itself, but is to be used as a sort of additional cry or additional complaint against your Lordships' House on the hustings, when you will not yield to the first popular cry that may be raised, that you are always voting for your own order and without reference to the interests of the community.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): I shall only trouble your Lordships with a few observations. In the first place, I desire to correct what appeared to me to be certain inaccuracies of fact. My noble and learned Friend who has just sat down said some clauses were introduced in the previous Bill to meet the case of infants and lunatics. I never heard of such clauses. I should like to know what provisions there are in this Bill as it stands beyond those which my noble and learned Friend says related to infants and lunatics. My Bill is taken from my noble Friend's Bill at its last stage. I find immediately following in the Reports of this House the Amendments to be moved on Third Reading, and in those Amendments there is no trace of any proposal whatever such as has been referred to.

LORD HALSBURY: If my noble and learned Friend will forgive me, the House adjourned. A Division took place on the Third Reading of the Bill, and the House was then adjourned for the express purpose of introducing those clauses.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): I think my noble Friend is mistaken. I have read the Debate on the Adjournment, and I find the House was adjourned for some days. It was not owing to the addition of any further clauses that the Bill was not carried by this House. It was on account of the clauses preceding. All I can say is I cannot find any trace of it, and the Bill I have introduced to your Lordships is in the last form in which I find my noble Friend's Bill. But if it be the case that some suggestion was then made which would have made the Bill better than it was then, there can be no difficulty in introducing in this Bill in Committee Amendments which would remove any objection on this head. The noble Marquess said this Bill was introduced as part of a scheme only, and he says—"You ask us now to vote for a fragment of the measure for which we voted on the previous occasion." Yes, but the other fragments of the Bill are contained in a measure which was read a second time in this House on Tuesday last, and therefore, if those clauses in last Tuesday's Bill were reproduced here, the noble Marquess must admit there would be no reason for objecting, but he says, "Because you have introduced it in two parts you have no right to ask us to vote for it." That seems to me to be a little imcomprehensible. The position of the noble Marquess is this: he could have been called upon to vote for the two Bills had they been one, but because they are divided he advances that as a reason for not supporting the present measure. Then it is said that many things have transpired since the measure was first introduced. If a land transfer scheme was desirable and necessary in 1889, it cannot be less desirable to-day. The noble Marquess has admitted that in certain cases it does not meet the grievance with which this Bill is intended to deal. The noble Marquess also referred to another measure passed by this House, the Small Holdings Act. When the measure for promoting small holdings was before the last Parliament a clause was introduced, at the instance of a Conservative Member, providing that in case of intestacy the land constituting a small holding should descend, as it would do if it were personalty. The clause, however, was ill-drawn, and on that account was struck out in your Lordships' House. The fact, however, remains that in a House of Commons largely Conservative such a clause is deemed necessary to prevent injustice. Then the Land Transfer Bill that has been passed for Ireland provides that in all cases of purchase under the Land Act, whereby tenants are converted into owners, the old Law of Inheritance is not to apply and the land is not to be dealt with under the Statute of Distributions. That, I may add, is a measure which was approved by the Government of whom the noble Marquess was the head. The noble Duke who has moved the Amendment is in error in supposing that my objection to the application of the Law of Inheritance relates only to its application to the small possessions of working men. I rest my case on broader ground than that, on the ground taken up by the noble Marquess himself, and it is because I believe that this measure will tend to prevent injustice, to prevent the disposition of a man's property in a way of which he would probably not have approved himself, that I ask your Lordships to read this Bill a second time.

On Question, whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion?—their Lordships divided:—Contents 52; Not-Contents 63.

Resolved in the negative; and Bill to be read 2ª this day six months.

CHARITABLE TRUSTS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 12.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Lord HALSBURY: My Lords, the Bill to which I ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading has reference to buildings erected as additions to and parts of chapels. The particular chapel with regard to which the question has arisen is one belonging to the Wesleyan connection. A decision of the Courts has rendered it extremely difficult if not impossible for the trustees of such congregations to sell the chapels they have built, and in that way either obtain larger ones or change the site, by reason of the peculiar wording of the Charitable Trusts Act. The question recently came before Mr. Justice Stirling, whose decision if it declares the law and there is no appeal—and indeed if I may venture to say so, it is obvious there can be no appeal — establishes that though power is given to trustees with regard to the chapel it does not apply to any little houses for caretakers or the ministers' house forming part of the same building; and the result is that not only in respect of the particular chapel in respect of which the question has arisen, but also in respect of many cases which have already been discussed the title has been much shaken by the decision of the learned Judge. The only object of the Bill is to allow the Act of Parliament to operate upon a chapel to which some little addition has been made either in respect of a minister's or a caretaker's house. That object is one which I think your Lordships will favour. I may say the Charity Commissioners who have been consulted on the subject are not averse to the amendment in the law which is proposed. I am not certain that I should not have regarded their disapproval as conclusive, but as a matter of fact they do not disapprove; and I believe that it is an amendment of the law which should receive the support of noble Lords on both sides of the House. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Halsbury.*)

Motion agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

LAW LIBRARY FOUR COURTS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 29.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order.)

Lord MONKSWELL said, that no Amendments were proposed.

Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

VON KRAUSE'S PETITION.

The Earl of LAUDERDALE presented a Petition from Friedrich Wilhelm von Krause of the City of Berlin, Banker, for leave to bring in a Bill to declare the marriage of Gustav Adolph Christian Egmont Von Krause with Marie Heinricksdorff null and void.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell): My Lords, the Petition which the noble Lord has presented is a Petition which I was asked to present to your Lordships' House in the ordinary course. Petitions in reference to such

Bills are presented to the Lord Chancellor; but it appears to me I ought not to present this Petition, and I must ask your Lordships to reject it. The Petition is not presented by either party to the marriage. It is a Petition by the father of the husband to declare the marriage between his son and his present wife null and void. The Petition states that the son was domiciled in Germany, and that according to the law of Germany he was not entitled to marry until the age of 25 without the sanction of the father, and that sanction was not obtained. The marriage took place in this country according to the law of this country, and it was, therefore, a valid marriage. There was a child born. The husband's father under these circumstances asks this House to declare the marriage null. There is no precedent for any such proceeding; and it appears to me it is impossible for your Lordships to create such a precedent. I therefore move that the Petition be rejected.

Moved, "That the said Petition be rejected."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Motion agreed to.

SANITARY CONDITION OF HOWTH AND CLONTARF.

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

The Earl of HOWTH moved for copies of the Reports of Dr. Stafford, Medical Sanitary Officer to the Local Government Board of Ireland, on the sanitary condition of the towns of Howth and Clontarf. He said, before moving for copies of the Reports mentioned in the Notice he would say a word or two on the circumstances connected with it. He intended, on behalf of local taxpayers throughout Ireland, to bring forward a certain great injustice to them which was fully exemplified in those Reports. He also intended to bring forward certain recommendations to the Local Government Board in reference to carrying out certain improvements. This was a matter having reference to sanitary affairs and Sanitary Authorities in their dealings with the Local Government Board. He begged to move according to that notice.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Reports of Dr. Stafford, Medical Sanitary Officer to the Local Government Board of Ireland, on the sanitary condition of the towns of Howth and Clontarf."—(The Lord Howth) (*E. Howth.*)

Lord MONKSWELL: My Lords, on behalf of the Local Government Board I beg to say that they have not the slightest objection to the noble Lord having copies of the Reports of Dr. Stafford. As I understand, the noble Lord knows already what Dr. Stafford's Report is; but I understand it is contrary to precedent for such a document to be laid on the Table of the House. Consequently, I am unable to accede to the Motion. I do not know whether the noble Lord insists upon its being laid on the Table, but I may say that it will be quite open to him to quote from the Report when the matter is brought again before the House.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

NORTH BERWICK PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 18.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Message from the Commons that they have added a Member to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills, to consider the Merchant Shipping Bill, as requested by their Lordships.

A Message ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room B on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 34.)

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 26th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON OPIUM.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of

State for India whether he can give the House any definite information as to whether the Royal Commission on Opium have concluded their inquiries; and when the Report may be expected?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I am informed that the Royal Commission on Opium have concluded their inquiries, so far as the taking of evidence is concerned. I understand that the Evidence and the Appendices are most voluminous, and that the medical aspect of the question will require to be very fully considered from a scientific point of view. Under these circumstances, the Commissioners are not able to fix a date for the presentation of their Report.

POOR RELIEF ADMINISTRATION AT RHYL.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE (West Ham S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that, as stated by Mr. Jacob Jones at a recent meeting of the St. Asaph Board of Guardians, the Rhyl Board of Guardians use the largest hotel in the town as an office from which to distribute relief to the poor; and whether he contemplates taking steps to put an end to the practice?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): As the result of my inquiries, I find that the pay station at Rhyl is a room at the extreme end of the hotel buildings adjoining the kitchen of the hotel. I am informed that it has a separate entrance in a different street from that in which the public entrances to the hotel are situate, and that persons receiving relief have never been allowed to enter the hotel from this room. The Guardians have received notice to give up possession of this pay station, and they are now taking steps to procure one elsewhere.

UNEMPLOYED DOCK LABOURERS.

MR. KEIR-HARDIE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it has been brought to his notice that the number of dock labourers idle on any one day of the week at the Port of London is 10,000; whether the Shipping Federation, and the shipping firms belonging thereto, are forcing their men to take up free labour tickets; and that the Federation, or the shipping firms belonging thereto, in cases where their men refuse to take the Federation ticket, are importing other labourers from the country, and thereby adding to the congestion at the London Docks; and whether he proposes to take any action to put an end to this state of affairs?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BURT, Morpeth) (who replied) said: Dock labour in the Port of London is subject to very great fluctuations, though the recent tendency has been towards a greater regularity of employment for the majority of the labourers so employed. I do not know the basis of the calculation alluded to in the question. It is, however, estimated by the Labour Department that during the first three months of the present year the average daily number of dock labourers seeking employment in the Port of London and not taken on has been about 3,000, though on particular days, especially towards the end of March, this number has been greatly exceeded. It cannot, however, be assumed that all these labourers were necessarily unemployed. The number of labourers employed at the docks has been considerably greater than in the corresponding period of 1893. With regard to the last part of the question, I am informed by the Shipping Federation that they have imported no labourers to London since February, 1891, and that their Registry of so-called "free labourers" has been in existence for the past three years. The Board of Trade are unable to prevent fluctuations of work at the docks, which are largely due to the periodic wool sales.

MR. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Shipping Federation are forcing seamen and dock labourers to take the Federation ticket, and refuse to give them employment unless they do? Is he also aware that when seamen are engaged on board ships without going to the Federation offices the agent of the Federation refuses to allow the captain to employ them?

MR. BURT: I am not aware of that.

WHITEBAIT AT WOOLWICH.

MR. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Chief Engineer of the Works Department, at Woolwich Arsenal, has on several occasions lately found the tubes of his condensers choked with whitebait; and whether he will cause an endeavour to be made to prevent the fish being sacrificed and the machinery being blocked?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): It will be well if no worse thing happens than that the Thames water should become so pure as to admit of whitebait being found to choke the tubes in which it is used. Such an accident did occur, I am told about six months ago; but a grating has been placed in the culvert, and I believe there has been no further damage to machinery or sacrifice of whitebait.

THE ISLAND OF TOBAGO.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what arrangement has been come to between Trinidad and the Island of Tobago to prevent the extinction of the latter colony, owing to its being deprived of any fiscal revenue under the federation scheme recently adopted?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. S. Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The matter is under consideration.

ST. LUCIA.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if Her Majesty's Government has received the Resolution of the Legislative Council of St. Lucia, West Indies, with regard to the effect of reducing the import duties on American goods under the McKinley Tariff—namely, the loss of revenue without any corresponding benefit to the planting interest of the Colony; and what action has been taken thereon towards the termination of the existing agreement with the United States?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The Resolution was duly received, but it was considered undesirable to take any action upon it until it was seen how the present arrangement with the United States would be affected by the Tariff Bill which is now before Congress.

Colonel HOWARD VINCENT: Has the position taken up by St. Lucia been adopted by either of the West Indian Colonies?

Mr. S. BUXTON: I do not know. I will inquire.

MONAGHAN MILITIA CAMP.

Mr. O'DRISCOLL (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War have the Military Authorities at Monaghan taken ground at Carnacassa for a camp to accommodate the Monaghan Militia in their annual training; is it true that last year, when the Militia were trained on the same ground, water for drinking and cooking purposes had to be carted from a lake nearly three miles distant from the camp, and have any provisions been made in the meantime to prevent a recurrence of this disadvantage; were tenders invited for camping ground; and, if so, were any offered; and was that for Carnacassa lower than all others; will any correspondence that passed on this subject be produced; and does the Commander-in-Chief approve of an Irish Militia regiment being trained where the supply of water is precarious and bad, and where it cannot even be availed of without carting it a distance of two or three miles?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Ground for a camp for the 5th battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers has been taken at Carnacassa for the training for this year. Last year, when there was a very unusual drought, water was obtained from a well 150 yards away, and from the town pumps at a distance of 1,200 yards. This year there is a good supply from wells on the ground, supplemented by a well within 300 yards. Tenders were called for. Of the three offers received, the Carnacassa ground was selected as most suitable for camping purposes. I may add that it comprises 10 acres more than last year, and that the rent is less. The Commander of the Forces in Ireland considers the arrangements very satisfactory.

REMOVALS OF IRISH LUNATICS.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that James Conniffe, who has been out of Ireland for 15 years, and who was recently an inmate of the Roxburgh

District Lunatic Asylum, was admitted into the Athlone Union Workhouse on the 10th instant under a warrant of removal from Mr. Peter Speirs, one of the Sheriffs Substitute of the County of Roxburgh, and that the Athlone Guardians are now obliged to have said Conniffe removed to Mullingar Lunatic Asylum; whether, considering that Conniffe was 15 years out of Ireland, his removal under the circumstances was legal; and whether any steps towards legislating to redress this grievance, which is only one of many, is contemplated?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Local Government Board inform me that the facts are as stated in the first paragraph. It also appears from the warrant of removal that the individual named had not acquired a settlement in Scotland, and the fact of his being 15 years absent from Ireland would not under the circumstances render the removal illegal. As regards the last paragraph, I have already directed the heads of a measure to be framed on the subject, and the Government are considering the propriety of introducing it should a suitable opportunity present itself.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can explain on what grounds the Senatus Academicus of the Edinburgh University have decided under the new curriculum that a degree with honours in modern languages is to be limited to French, German, Italian, and Spanish, to the exclusion of Celtic, although a Celtic Chair is established in the University?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Senatus Academicus of Edinburgh has been compelled to accept the new curriculum referred to by the hon. Member in accordance with Ordinance No. 44, Section 6, interpreting General Ordinance No. 11, Section 11, Sub-section 1 (a), under which the Universities Commission have excluded Celtic from the subjects to be studied with the view to graduation with honours. Ordinance No. 44 has lain before Parliament for the statutory period under Section 20 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, and no Petition has been presented against it. As the hon. Member refers particularly to the Senatus, I think it right to state that the Senatus would have preferred to include Celtic.

DR. MACGREGOR: Who is responsible for this retrograde course?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I am afraid the Commissioners first and Parliament next, because Parliament has passed the Ordinance.

DR. MACGREGOR: Is there any remedy?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: None whatever.

DR. MACGREGOR: Can the question be re-opened, say, on the Estimates?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: No.

LETTERKENNY GUARDIANS.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many elected, and how many *ex-officio* members there are on the Letterkenny Board of Guardians; how many of the *ex-officio* Guardians failed to attend any meeting of the Board in the year ended the 31st of March, 1893; and how many failed to attend any meeting in the year ended 31st of March, 1894?

MR. J. MORLEY: There are 21 elected and 21 *ex-officio* Guardians on the Board referred to. I understand that in the year ended the 31st of March, 1893, 14 *ex-officio* Guardians failed to attend any meeting of the Board, and that in the year ended the 31st of March, 1894, 12 *ex-officio* Guardians did not attend any meeting.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Is it not possible for the Lord Chancellor by appointing Magistrates to do something to remedy this grave scandal?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will call the Lord Chancellor's attention to the facts.

MEDICAL RELIEF IN IRELAND.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a dispensary doctor who is served with a red ticket is bound to attend to the case throughout, or only to give a single visit; and whether he can require a second ticket before revisiting the patient?

Mr. J. MORLEY : The Local Government Board inform me that when a medical officer of a dispensary district receives a ticket signed by a duly authorised person requiring him to attend a patient he is bound to continue his attendance throughout the illness for which it was issued and without requiring a second ticket. If, however, the ticket has been improperly issued and the Committee of Management cancel it, his responsibility to attend the case ceases from the moment it is cancelled.

PRESENTS TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the explanation of the items charged at page 204 of the Annual Accounts of the Ordnance Factories for the year 1892-3 for cases and packing for Lee-Metford rifles, and cordite ammunition, to be sent to various foreign Governments ; why, in the case of the German Government, a Lee-Metford rifle and a cavalry sword were alone sent, whereas it would appear from the Return that, in addition to Lee-Metford rifles, certain quantities of cordite ammunition were also sent to the Netherlands Government, the Russian Government, the Swiss Government, and the Uruguayan Government ; why were empty cartridge cases only sent to the Japanese Government, and why were 500 rounds of cordite ammunition sent to the Russian and Uruguayan Governments as against much smaller quantities sent to the Netherlands and Belgian Governments ; why were these particular Governments selected for these favours ; will the Government of this country receive reciprocally any samples of rifles and ammunition, up to date, from the Governments to which these gifts are made ; is there any reason to suppose that the Governments so favoured are able or willing to give us in return equally valuable or useful specimens of articles of war material ; and is it the practice in this country to communicate to foreign Governments the results of inventions for improving the armament of our troops ?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : The Lee-Metford rifles and cordite ammunition were presents to foreign Governments strictly on the principle of reciprocity. As the foreign Governments can, if they please, obtain the articles from the trade, there is an advantage in presenting them and in obtaining specimens of foreign manufacture in exchange. No information is communicated which it is desirable or practicable to keep secret ; but when arms and other stores are in general use there can be nothing confidential in regard to them.

THE CORK STREET PREACHERS.

Mr. THOMAS HEALY (Wexford, N.) : On behalf of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Maurice Healy), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Mr. George Williams, prominent as the leader of the street preachers in Cork, is the person of that name who was until recently a clerk in the Paymaster's Office, Dublin Castle, and who, at the age of 40, was permitted to retire from the Public Service on pension on the plea of ill-health ; if so, what the amount of the pension is ; who certified as to Mr. Williams's ill-health ; and, what was the nature of his malady ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : The gentleman referred to is, I am informed, the same person who retired on pension last year, at the age of 43, from the Paymaster General's Office, Dublin. The pension was £143 15s. per annum, and the cause of retirement was rheumatic gout, it being certified that his arm was so disabled that he could scarcely write, and was uncurable. The certificate was that of Mr. Williams's own medical adviser, but was confirmed by the Government medical referee in Dublin.

Mr. SEXTON : Do this gentleman's physical infirmities prevent him leading the evangelists in Cork ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I believe they do not.

Mr. SEXTON : Then seeing that they seem to have disappeared, will he be called upon to resume his duties or give up his pension ?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) : Is it not a fact that many of the most distinguished preachers have been men weak in bodily health ?

Mr. SEXTON : They had no pensions.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Sir J. T. Hibbert, Oldham) : I may say I have seen the handwriting of this gentleman, and it is so bad that I should be sorry to see him again in office.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Is it not a matter of congratulation that this gentleman has so far recovered as to be able to preach the gospel?

MR. SEXTON: I beg to give notice to-morrow to strike off the pension of this gentleman, in order that he may preach the gospel gratis.

BOARD SCHOOL FOR HAMMERSMITH.

MR. CARVILL (Newry): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if the attention of the Education Department has been drawn to the fact that the London School Board propose to erect a school in Section or Block VI. in Hammersmith, at a point on the extreme verge of the area remote from the great body of the school population, on a site abutting on a railway, while abundant vacant land near the middle of the section and convenient for the great mass of the children is available for the purpose; and if he will see that the school is placed where it will be most useful to and accessible by the children?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The site referred to is the Brook Green site in Block VI. of Chelsea, upon which the London School Board are about to erect temporary buildings to supply a pressing need for free education. It is near to the railway, and to the western boundary of the block. In the opinion of the Department it is fairly well situated to meet the needs of the district; it is within the radius of half-a-mile of nearly all the inhabitants, and, in point of access, is greatly preferable, especially for young children, to the nearest Board schools upon the other side of the Uxbridge Road and Hammersmith Road. The Petitioners, at whose instance the school is being supplied, themselves urged that it should be erected upon this site, and the Department have informed the School Board that they see no reason why the Board should not proceed to the erection of a permanent school there. The acquisition of any alternative site in the position indicated in the question by the process of compulsory purchase would necessarily involve very considerable delay.

ALLEGED CRUELTY AT BRENTWOOD SCHOOL.

SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to a letter published in *The Star*, of the 21st April, from a woman, one of whose children recently died at Brentwood School, with marks of violence on its body, caused, as she alleges, by its being kicked down a flight of stone stairs, detailing various acts of cruelty, such as severe beatings with sticks, blows on the face and head, whipping with nettles, and prolonged immersion in cold water, perpetrated on the persons of pauper children in that school; and whether he will order an inquiry into the case?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board have communicated with the Guardians of the Hackney Union as to the letter referred to, and they are informed that a special committee of 14 members has been appointed to inquire into the charges, and that the committee will sit from day to day until the inquiry is completed. The Local Government Board will await the result of the investigation by the Guardians before determining as to directing an inquiry by one of their Inspectors.

MARINE INQUIRIES BY THE BOARD OF TRADE.

SIR C. CAMERON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether representations have been made to him as to the advisability of appointing engineers as assessors at Board of Trade marine inquiries; and, if so, whether he has taken, or proposes to take, any steps in the matter?

*MR. BURT (who replied) said: Under the existing practice, an engineer is appointed as assessor in all cases in which the formal investigation into a shipping casualty involves, or appears likely to involve, the cancelling or suspension of the certificate of an engineer, and also in any other case in which special engineering knowledge is required.

CAVAN LAND COMMISSION.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Bomford, who is now acting as valuer for the Land Commission in the County Cavan, was formerly agent to a large landlord in the county; that he is related to that landlord and to several other landlords in the county, and to Mr. Barnes, the principal valuer for the landlords in the county in fair rent cases; that he was formerly a member of a Sub-Commission in the county, and removed to another county on account of his close connection with the landed interest there; whether these facts were known to Mr. Wrench and other members of the Commission when Mr. Bomford was sent as valuer to Cavan; and whether in all cases in which the figures are given in the preliminary list the Court valuer's valuation exceeds the rent fixed by the Sub-Commissioners?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that Mr. Bomford, now acting as valuer for the Land Commission in County Cavan, is related to two Cavan landlords for whom he acted as agent prior to 1881. I am not aware that he is related to Mr. Barnes, the principal valuer for the landlords in the county in fair rent cases. The Land Commissioners state it is not a fact that Mr. Bomford has been removed from a Sub-Commission in Cavan. The allocation of work to the different Assistant Commissioners now acting as Court valuers forms no part of Mr. Wrench's duties, and until the present question was put he tells me he was not aware that Mr. Bomford was at work in the Cavan district. As to the Court valuer's valuation exceeding the rent fixed by the Sub-Commissioners, my hon. and learned Friend refers to cases which have been listed for hearing and are now pending the decision of the Court, and under these circumstances I do not think it is desirable or expedient that at the present stage they should form the subject of discussion in the House.

MR. KNOX: Can the right hon. Gentleman name any instance in which this gentleman has not raised the valuation? Who allocates these duties?

MR. J. MORLEY: The allocations of work are made, I presume, by the Land Commission. It is certainly extremely and obviously undesirable that the valuer of the Court should be sent to a district in which he has connections among the landlords.

MR. KNOX: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that Mr. Bomford is sent to another district, and that an independent valuer is sent down?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not clear that I have any power whatever to give directions to the Land Commission. But I will call their attention to the matter.

THE LANESBOROUGH ESTATE.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now say if one Timothy Boland, a tenant on Lord Lanesborough's property, purchasing the interest in his farm from the former tenant in 1888, and paying three-and-a-half years' arrears of rent to the agent, an oral undertaking was given by the agent that the rent would not be raised; whether the rent has since been raised by the Land Commission; and whether he will direct the attention of the Committee on the Land Acts to cases in which advantages secured to the tenant in this way are ignored by the Land Commission in fixing fair rents?

MR. J. MORLEY: When replying to a question on this subject on the 12th instant, I stated that it was a fact that the Land Commissioners, after hearing all the evidence given by both landlord and tenant, fixed the rent in Boland's case at £37, the old rent having been £30. Inquiry has been made relative to the statement to the effect that an oral undertaking had been given by the agent that the rent would not be raised, and I am informed by the Commissioners that they have no information in the matter, and are unable, therefore, to say whether such an undertaking was or was not given.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, on the last occasion when the Land Commission sat in Cavan, Mr. Wrench, formerly agent to Lord Lanesborough, was one of the Commissioners, although, as he says, taking no part in the adjudication of appeals from Lord Lanesborough's property; whether he is aware that several of the appeals put down for hearing at the coming sitting of the Commission in Cavan are appeals by Lord Lanesborough or by his tenants; and whether Mr. Wrench will be one of the Commissioners sitting in Cavan on this occasion?

MR. J. MORLEY: Mr. Wrench informs me that he was one of the Commissioners at the last sitting for hearing appeals in Cavan, but took no part in any case from the Lanesborough estate. There are five appeals on this estate for the coming sitting of the Commissioners at Cavan, and Mr. Wrench will not be one of the Court.

PROSECUTION OF CAB DRIVERS.

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he could state the number of cabdrivers summoned at the various Metropolitan and City Police Courts, during the three months ending the 31st of March, for offences against the Hackney Carriage Acts, such as loitering, plying for hire, causing obstruction, &c. ; whether he is aware that as many as 70 or 80 of such cases are frequently heard and decided at one Police Court in a single afternoon ; and if he will consider whether such cases might be dealt with more suitably in a special Court, where an inference against the drivers would be less readily suggested than in a Police Court ?

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. George Russell, North Beds) (who replied) said : The two Metropolitan Police Courts which have far the largest number of summonses against cabdrivers are Marlborough Street and Bow Street. I am informed by the Chief Magistrate that at Bow Street, during the three months ending March 31 last, there were 333 summonses against cabdrivers for the offences mentioned by my hon. Friend, making an average of 26 a week. At Marlborough Street, where these cases are heard on two days a week, the number of summonses against cabdrivers would be from 20 to 25 each day. It is therefore not a fact that so many as 70 or 80 cases are heard at one Police Court in a single afternoon. In the opinion of the Chief Magistrate it would be extremely injurious to the interests of both the public and the cabmen if all such cases were heard at a special Court.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) : Will the Home Secretary consider the advisability of establishing a much larger number of stands for one or two cabs, and thereby enable the public more easily to call cabs ?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL : The right hon. Gentleman will no doubt consider that.

WEIGHBRIDGES AT IRISH MARKETS.

Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Government will give directions to the local Inspectors of Weights and Measures in Ireland to prosecute, at the instance of the Agricultural Department of the Irish Land Commission, the keepers of weighbridges which are unsuited and useless by reason of their construction for the weighing of cattle, sheep, and pigs, pursuant to the provisions of the Market and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, 1887 and 1891 ?

Mr. J. MORLEY : The Acts mentioned provide for the prosecution of persons appointed by the Market Authorities to weigh cattle, for refusing to weigh, for neglect of other duties, or for issuing false Returns of weight as specified in the statutes, but such persons are not responsible if the weighing machines are unsuitable, useless, or of faulty construction. The Local Market Authorities in respect of markets and fairs, where tolls are collected, are the persons responsible for providing proper weighing machines and equipments, and the Land Commission assure me that they are and have been using every endeavour, with a considerable measure of success, to induce the Local Authorities to provide suitable accommodation in this respect.

THE INNISKILLING FUSILIERS.

Mr. DANE : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why it is that no Quartermaster is allowed to the 3rd Battalion of the Inniskilling Fusiliers ; has this regiment recently been raised to six companies ; and is it now the only six company Line Battalion of Militia regiment without a Quartermaster ?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** : The battalion referred to has had six companies for many years ; but it has only the strength of five companies. A battalion should have six full companies to justify the appointment of a Quartermaster. The 3rd Battalion Inniskilling Fusiliers is not the only Militia battalion of six nominal companies which is without a Quartermaster.

FEMALE LABOUR IN MINES IN INDIA.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what steps Her Majesty's Government are now taking to carry out the Resolutions of the Berlin Conference of 1890, as to the desirability of prohibiting the employment of women in the underground workings of mines?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Lord Cross and Lord Kimberley have both intimated to the Government of India their opinion that the employment of women and girls under ground should be prohibited in India, in accordance with the Resolution of the Berlin Conference. Lord Kimberley decided that an Inspector of Mines, who had served as one of Her Majesty's Assistant Inspectors of Mines in this country, should be sent out to India in order to advise upon the details of a Mines Regulation Act. That Inspector has been for some time prosecuting his inquiries, and when his Report is received legislation will be undertaken on that subject.

BARBED WIRE FENCES IN IRELAND.

MR. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that alongside of the public highway between Bruree and Killmallock, County Limerick, a barbed wire fence has been set up which extends several hundred yards along the road to the danger and annoyance of persons passing along the said highway; is it the duty of the Police Authorities to take legal proceedings in such cases; and whether he would see that steps be taken to have the law complied with?

MR. J. MORLEY: In reference to this question, I am advised that it is not the duty of the Police Authorities to take proceedings in such cases. Under the Act 56 & 57 Vict. c. 32, the County Surveyor appears to be the proper person to look after those road fences.

FREE EDUCATION IN ST. PANCRAS.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Department received a Petition from 336 parents in the neighbourhood of Albany Street, St. Pancras, demanding free education for their children, in March, 1893; is he aware that, although after correspondence with the School Board for London, and inquiry by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, the Department on 17th August, 1893, wrote calling on the Board to provide a new school in the neighbourhood of Cumberland Market, and asking to have at an early date any proposals the Board may think well to make as to a temporary school; and that, from that date to the present time, the School Board for London has made no proposals either for permanent or temporary accommodation; and whether he is prepared to take immediate action in face of this delay on the part of the School Board?

MR. ACLAND: The Petition received in March, 1893, from 336 parents, related to the neighbourhood of another Marylebone school; but a Petition was received on 27th April from the neighbourhood in question, and, upon inquiry, a deficiency of 164 free places was reported by Her Majesty's Inspector; a letter was addressed to the School Board upon the 17th of August in the terms quoted, and no proposals have yet been received. The Department are pressing the Board to take action, and addressed a further letter to them on the 2nd instant.

POLICE CONSTABLE WHITING.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the case of Police-constable Whiting, of the C Division; whether he is aware that Whiting has been dismissed the Force, although he has borne a good character for seven years; and whether he will cause further inquiry to be made into the case, seeing that Whiting acted in the exercise of his duty, when called upon for help by Police-constable M'Carthy, and was not at the time aware of M'Carthy's offence?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: The Commissioner of Police has reported to me on this case, and it appears that Police-constable Whiting was dismissed for deliberately taking into custody one of two men on a charge which he knew to be false and unfounded, and for which the prisoner was detained in the cells for one hour and a quarter on a false charge. It is true that Police-constable Whiting had had no reports since 1887, but the deliberate taking into custody of a man on a false charge, and allowing that false charge to be made against him, knowing at the time that such charge was false, entirely unfits him for a position of trust or authority, with the characters and liberty of innocent men at his mercy ?

MILLBANK PRISON SITE.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the demolition of Millbank Prison is now completed ; what is the acreage of the entire area thus placed at his disposal ; what proportion of the site is to be appropriated to the new Picture Gallery and to the London County Council (for workmen's dwellings) respectively ; whether any portion of the site is to be disposed of to any other and what persons or bodies ; in what way the river frontage is to be occupied ; and whether the opportunity will be taken to create improved access to this property from the direction of Victoria Street and Westminster ?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) : The demolition of Millbank Prison is complete. The entire area of the site is just under 23 acres. Of this, about two and a-quarter acres have been appropriated for the Picture Gallery, and about 10 acres to the London County Council for artisans' dwellings. The remainder of the site will be disposed of as follows :—About six acres will be handed over to the War Office for military purposes ; a plot of about one and a-half acre behind the Picture Gallery will be reserved for a building for offices and examination rooms for the Civil Service Commissioners, and the balance will go in roads. The centre of the river frontage will be occupied by the Picture Gallery, and on either side will be military buildings, of which the form and character are not yet decided. The question of improving the approaches to the site is one that must be dealt with by the Vestry and the London County Council.

MR. H. L. W. LAWSON (Gloucester, Cirencester) : Will no part be reserved for open spaces ?

MR. H. GLADSTONE : Not actually as open spaces, but a good deal will not be occupied by buildings.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY : Will the Government, in the interest of the public, try and secure a good approach to the property from the back ?

MR. H. GLADSTONE : Yes ; so far as it is in our power.

THE LOSS OF THE "COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN."

MR. PAUL (Edinburgh, E.) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the burning of the saloon in the Hull trader and passenger boat *Countess of Aberdeen* after she had stranded on the coast of Aberdeenshire on the night of Sunday, the 15th of April ; if he has reason to believe that the fire was due to the use of dangerously inflammable oil ; and whether the Board of Trade has any power to restrict the use of oil with too low a flash point for safety ?

*MR. BURT (who replied) said : Yes, Sir ; the attention of the President of the Board of Trade has been called to the case of the *Countess of Aberdeen*, and he has ordered an inquiry to be held with regard to her stranding and to the fire which subsequently occurred. Until the result of that inquiry is known, I prefer not to express any opinion in the matter, but I may say that the Board of Trade have no power to prescribe the quality of oil to be used on board ship.

MR. PAUL : Arising out of this subject, may I ask the Home Secretary when the Committee on Petroleum will be appointed ?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL : I cannot say.

ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER OF A SEAMAN.

MR. J. HAVELOCK WILSON : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to an inquiry recently held at the Queenstown Petty Sessions into a charge of manslaughter of a seaman, named John Gomer, by Samuel Nelson, Captain of the British ship *Bannockburn;* whether he is aware that five seamen of the said ship were in attendance to give evidence on the hearing, and were not called; whether he is aware that the said seamen were prepared not only to give evidence of the circumstances immediately attendant upon the death of the said John Gomer, but were also prepared to make a statement of previous ill-treatment of the deceased by the captain; and whether he will direct an inquiry to be made into all the circumstances of the case?

*Mr. BURT (who replied) said: The attention of the President of the Board of Trade has been called to the case to which my hon. Friend refers, but the Board of Trade have no power to review the decision of the Court with regard to the criminal charge upon which it adjudicated. The President has, however, decided to order a Local Marine Board investigation into the allegations of ill-treatment made against the master of the *Bannockburn*, with a view to his certificate being dealt with if the evidence is found to justify such a course.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON: Can the hon. Gentleman indicate at which port the local inquiry will be held?

Mr. BURT: I cannot say, but I will get the information for the hon. Member.

BARNET LOCAL BOARD DISTRICT.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what is the reason of the protracted delay in granting to the Barnet Local Board authority over an extended district, which extension is not objected to by either the Hertfordshire or Middlesex County Councils or the neighbouring authorities affected?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Hertfordshire County Council made an Order which, whilst extending the district of the Barnet Local Board, would have altered the Rural Sanitary District of the Barnet Union, which is partly included in the County of Middlesex. The Local Government Board had doubt as to the legality of this Order, and they submitted a case to the Law Officers of the Crown as to the powers of a County Council under such circumstances. The Law Officers advised that neither the County Council nor a Joint Committee of the Councils of the Counties in which the Rural Sanitary District was situate could make such an Order. With the view of meeting this difficulty a provision has been introduced into the Local Government Act under which an Order may be made for the extension of the district by a Joint Committee of the two counties.

THE VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Sir D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether Mr. James Keith, C.E., has prepared a Report with reference to the heating and ventilation of the Houses of Parliament; and, if so, whether the Report will be circulated for the information of Members?

*Mr. H. GLADSTONE: In December last Mr. Keith, as a professional gentleman interested in such matters, obtained leave from my predecessor to examine the warming and ventilating arrangements at the Houses of Parliament, but he was expressly told that no commission was thereby given him to make a Report. He has sent in to me a Report condemning the present system in some respects, and it has, apparently, been widely circulated. I do not propose to lay it on the Table of the House. I must remind hon. Members that in 1891 a Select Committee, presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University, made a thorough investigation of the ventilation of the House, and drew their Report upon the evidence of surveyors, sanitary and mechanical engineers, chemists, and other independent experts. As at present advised, I see no reason for disturbing the decisions then arrived at.

PATENT OFFICE FEES.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what the total amount of fees would have been which would have accrued to the Patent Office of the Treasury, in respect of the 121,242 patents which were voided from the 1st of July, 1852, to the 31st of December, 1893, if such voided patents had been kept up by payment of renewal fees, or otherwise, for the full period of 14 years (including in such total the sum of £3,000,000, or thereabouts, paid in respect of such patents until they became voided)?

***Mr. BURT** (who replied) said: This is a hypothetical question, to which I can only give a very general reply. The figures would probably reach somewhere about £20,000,000.

CLARENCE LANES, ROEHAMPTON.

Mr. THORNTON (Clapham): On behalf of the hon. Member for Wandsworth, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the freeholder of the Clarence Lanes, Roehampton, has offered to place them at the disposal of the public gratis, if the Government will re-open the gate into Richmond Park at the end of the lane; and, if so, whether he will make the necessary provision in the Estimates for maintaining the road and gate?

***Mr. H. GLADSTONE** (who replied) said: It is true that the owner of Clarence Lanes has made a generous offer to make them over to the public, but, pending the result of communications between the Office of Works and the London County Council and the Wandsworth District Board as to the making-up and maintenance of the road, I am unable just at present to give the hon. Member a definite reply.

PARLIAMENTARY REGISTERS.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board why his Motion for the Return "Parliamentary Electors" (No. 40 of this Session), agreed to by this House on the 15th of March, was not framed so as to elicit the information required from the Register which came into force on 1st January, 1894, instead of being limited to the expired Register of 1893?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The number of electors on the Parliamentary Register on the 1st of January, 1893, was taken because these particulars were at once available, having already been obtained for the purpose of a Parliamentary Return. Similar particulars could not be given as regards those on the Register in January, 1894, without calling for new Returns, and this would have occasioned very considerable delay.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY: Is it not a fact that under a section of the Registration Act the Register coming into force at the beginning of this year ought to have been deposited at the Home Office before the 21st October last?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Yes; but I do not think the new Register will give the hon. Gentleman the information he desires.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

Mr. ALBAN GIBBS (London): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in some cases, writers with only 10 years' service have been promoted to the Abstractor Class with a commencing salary of £150 per annum, whilst others with over 20 years' service have commenced with only £110 per annum, rising by £2 10s. to £150 per annum, and have to serve 36 years before they can reach a salary of £150; and, if so, whether the Treasury will, in addition to allowing some writers so promoted to carry with them, according to the ordinary practice of the Service, the salaries they were earning at the time of appointment, also adopt some means by which men with 15 and 20 years' service will not be expected to serve so long a period as 36 years before they are enabled to reach the present maximum salary of £150 per annum?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I have already dealt with the matters referred to in my answers given to the hon. Baronet the Member for the Kingston Division of Surrey on the 12th of June, 1893, and to the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley on the 12th of April. I am not able to add anything to the answers then given.

SWAZILAND.

Baron H. DE WORMS (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give the House any further information relative to the proposed transfer of Swaziland to the South African Republic; whether the Queen Regent, and a large section of the native population, are adverse to such transfer; and whether he can state what course Her Majesty's Government propose to take in view of this serious condition of affairs?

Mr. S. BUXTON: A meeting of the Queen Regent and Council of the Swazi nation to consider the question was to take place on the 24th instant, and Her

Majesty's Government have not yet learnt the result.

LOCAL COURTS IN LANCASHIRE.

Mr. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Her Majesty's Government have considered the advisability of meeting the wishes of Lancashire (as expressed to the Lord Chancellor in deputation) that a Judge should be appointed to be attached to the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division, who should try all actions in those Divisions arising in Lancashire, and also all actions and originating summonses in the Queen's Bench Division, and that such Judge should sit throughout the legal year in Liverpool and Manchester alternately?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: The Lord Chancellor received a deputation from Lancashire, who expressed to him their desire that there should be continuous sittings throughout the legal year in that county of a Judge of the High Court to take business arising in all Divisions of that Court. Since that occasion arrangements have been made for providing more frequent sittings at fixed dates at Manchester and Liverpool; and it is desirable to have some experience of the amount of business done at those sittings, and the adequacy of those arrangements, before contemplating a change of such importance as that which the question indicates.

SLIGO, LEITRIM, AND NORTHERN COUNTIES RAILWAY.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether at the request of the Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties Railway Company, it is proposed to cancel the debt of £28,000, being seven years' interest due on money lent, which the Company owes to the Irish Board of Works; whether he is aware that the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland has offered to buy the Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties Railway Company, paying £90,000 to the Board of Works, and repaying the amount of interest owing; and whether this offer will receive the favourable consideration of the Government?

*Mr. JORDAN (Meath, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Great Northern and Belfast interests combined, and represented by the hon. Member, are, with its usual philanthropy, most anxious to acquire a good going concern at less than its original cost?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! A question put in those terms should not be answered.

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT (who replied) said: A proposal to the effect of the first paragraph has been made, but has not been acceded to by the Government. A joint offer to purchase the line has been received from the Great Northern and Midland Great Western Companies, and will receive full consideration from the Treasury, along with other proposals; but I am not in a position as yet to announce any decision on the subject.

Mr. SEXTON: Is it a fact that the acceptance of the offer will entail a loss on the Treasury of £10,000? Is not public opinion in the district served by the line strongly adverse to the sale; and will the Treasury regard this question as one of public policy?

Mr. DANE: Did not the Chief Secretary receive an influential deputation, composed of persons resident in the parts served by the Company, and was it not strongly urged that the acceptance of the proposal would be most detrimental to the Company?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: It is quite true that the Chief Secretary and myself received such a deputation, representative of various sections of Irish opinion, on this subject, and full consideration will be given to the views expressed by those who live in the district before any decision is arived at.

Mr. JACKSON (Leeds, N.): Is a decision likely to be arrived at within a reasonable time?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Matters of this kind take some time.

Mr. WOLFF: Before a decision is finally arrived at, will the House or hon. Members interested have an opportunity of expressing their views?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Hon. Members interested in the district will have an opportunity of making any representations.

PIRÆUS AND LARISSA RAILWAY COMPANY.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received certain representations from the contractors for the construction of the Piræus and Larissa Railway Company as regards the present action of the Greek Government towards them; and whether they are giving the subject their serious consideration?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Representations have been received from the contractors as regards the action of the Greek Government, and Her Majesty's Representative at Athens has endeavoured by unofficial action to obtain for them favourable treatment. But the question is one of a contract between the Greek Government and the British firm, which the latter have failed to execute, and is necessarily subject to Greek law. The first remedy of the contractors, if they consider they have to complain of the action of the Greek Government, is by litigation in the Law Courts, and it is only in case of an obvious denial of justice and after that remedy is exhausted that there would be grounds for diplomatic intervention. In view of the British interests involved, Her Majesty's Government will continue to do what is in their power to promote a friendly and equitable settlement.

KILPEDDER PETTY SESSIONS COURT.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the removal of the Kilpedder Petty Sessions District Court from Kilgarvan to Kenmare, which is causing great inconvenience to the inhabitants of the district, many of whom are obliged to travel nearly 18 miles to have their cases heard; and that the proprietors of 30 business houses are obliged to take their weights and measures to Kenmare to be tested quarterly; if he is aware that the Kilpedder Petty Sessions Court was established nearly a century ago, and is in the centre of a populous district 12 miles square; and whether, as there is a Magistrate available living within a quarter of a mile of the town, he will direct that the Petty Sessions Court be re-established?

MR. J. MORLEY: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to put this question down for another day, as I have not yet been furnished with a Report on it.

THE KNIGHT OF KERRY AND THE POOR RATE.

MR. KILBRIDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Knight of Kerry, by persistently refusing to pay the poor's rate in sufficient time, has thereby deprived the tenants on his Valentia property rated at £4 and under of the right to vote at a Parliamentary election; whether his attention has been drawn to the statement of County Court Judge Shaw, expressing his astonishment at the number struck off the Parliamentary Register for this cause; and whether he will direct the Local Government Board to compel the rate collector to obtain payment of the rates within the statutable period, so that persons entitled to the franchise may not be deprived of the right conferred on them by Parliament?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board are informed by the clerk of the Union that the rate collector furnished the agent of the Knight of Kerry in May, 1893, with particulars of holdings valued at and under £4, and that subsequently he repeatedly pressed for payment, with the view of preventing the tenants from being disfranchised. It was not until November, however, that the rates were paid. The County Court Judge considered that an undue number of voters were disqualified from this cause. With regard to the last paragraph, it does not appear, I am informed, that there was any default on the part of the collector.

MR. KILBRIDE: Will the right hon. Gentleman direct the Local Government Board to impress upon the Guardians the necessity of collecting the rate within the statutory time, so that a large number of men may not be disfranchised?

MR. J. MORLEY: I will call the attention of the Local Government Board to the matter, and ascertain their sentiments on the point.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, S.): Will this injustice be rendered impossible by the Registration Bill of the Government?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have not examined the case from that point of view.

CASTLE COVE POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. KILBRIDE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has considered the unsatisfactory postal arrangements between Castle Cove and Caherdaniel, County Kerry, under which letters arrive at Castle Cove at 4.30 p.m., and replies must be posted at 6 p.m., giving only an hour and a-half for reply to letters in a rural district where there is no delivery; and whether, to meet the wants of the locality, he will arrange that the mail should leave Castle Cove in the morning at 6.50, reaching Caherdaniel in time for the mail leaving there for Waterville at 8.30, involving no change in present arrangements between Caherdaniel and Waterville; this alteration, which entails no additional expense, will meet the requirements of the locality?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): I carefully inquired into this matter last year, and I would remind the hon. Member that I wrote to him on the 1st of August explaining that I had in the preceding month been able to effect a considerable improvement in the service, giving, in fact, a delivery on six instead of on three days a week. I pointed out at the same time why I could not sanction the further alteration, which would much extend the period during which the postman is on duty, and would involve additional expense, which is not warranted, as there is already a serious loss on the service.

VENTRY HARBOUR.

Sir T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the work on the proposed new pier at Ventry Harbour, County Kerry, will be commenced by the Congested Districts Board?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board inform me that they do not at present propose to construct a pier at Ventry Harbour. Other landing places in Kerry are to be improved, and the funds at the Board's disposal are not large enough to enable them to undertake more than a small number of such works at the same time.

Sir T. ESMONDE: Will the question of the pier be considered after these works have been completed?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Board have it under consideration.

Mr. KILBRIDE: Will the Congested Districts Board fulfil their promise to make boatslips on the Island of Valentia, or a pier in the neighbourhood of Cahirciveen?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will inquire.

THE SAMOAN ISLANDS.

Sir T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government of New Zealand have made proposals to the Colonial Office for the future administration of the Samoan Islands, and that the Samoans have repeatedly expressed their concurrence with the views of the New Zealand Government; and whether, in view of the unsettled condition of these Islands, and of their immense importance to Her Majesty's Australasian Dominions, Her Majesty's Government will give favourable consideration to the proposals of the New Zealand Government?

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): At the same time, will the hon. Gentleman state the terms of the offier made by the Government of New Zealand that that colony should undertake the administration of the Samoan Islands; and whether the Secretary of State has received any communications from any of the Australian Governments, indicating their willingness to afford the necessary support to New Zealand in this matter; if so, which Governments have now adopted this course?

Mr. S. BUXTON: A telegram has been received on the matter from New Zealand; and we have learnt that it is supported by the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania; but I cannot make any statement on the subject beyond that contained in the answer of my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.

MALTESE MARRIAGE LAWS.

Mr. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominister): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can now inform the House if the Privy Council has arrived at any decision relative to the Marriage Legacy question in Malta; and, if so, whether the correspondence upon the subject may be laid upon the Table of the House of Commons?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The question referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council relates not to Marriage Legacies, but to the validity of certain marriages in Malta. The Judicial Committee have not yet given their decision. The Marriage Legacy question upon which there has been some correspondence with the Government of Malta is not a matter of such public interest as to warrant the presentation of the correspondence to Parliament.

Mr. RANKIN: May I be allowed to see the correspondence?

Mr. S. BUXTON: If the hon. Gentleman will call at the Colonial Office I shall be glad to show it to him.

IRISH LAW REPORTS.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there is no copy of the Irish Law Reports in the Library of the House of Commons; and whether, in view of the early sitting of the Committee on the Land Act (Ireland), he will take into consideration the desirability of having collected and published for the use of the Members Reports of the leading cases on the Irish Land Acts, with the decisions, and also summaries of the points raised and the effects of the decisions?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am aware of what is stated in the first paragraph. All the important cases on the Irish Land Acts down to the end of 1892 are carefully noted, and the effect of the decisions explained in *Cherry's Treatise on the Land Acts*, and the subsequent cases will be found in the Irish Legal Reports. The point raised by my hon. Friend will no doubt receive the early attention of the Select Committee.

Mr. DANE: Does not the Library of the House of Lords contain the Reports, and have not Members of this House access to that Library?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand that hon. Members have access to the Library of the House of Lords, but I am doubtful if these Reports are to be found there.

Mr. DANE: They are.

CURRAGH CAMP.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, in view of the fact that new contracts are about to be entered into for works at the Curragh Camp, if in the interest of Irish industries, and in fulfilment of his promise given on the 27th of February, 1893, he will see that in the preparation of estimates for the proposed works, due provision will be made for making use of Killaloe slates, provided they can be supplied equal in quality and not higher in price than other slates?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Only one contract for military buildings in Ireland has been made since the reply referred to. In it the specification of Welsh roofing slates is omitted, and the slates to be used are required to be equal in quality to a sample in the Royal Engineer Office, and the same course will be taken in future contracts.

SOLDIERS' TRAVELLING PRIVILEGES.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a statement in the London Press of the 24th of April, to the effect that a non-commissioned officer has been refused a passage in the mail boat of the London and North Western Railway from Dublin to Holyhead because he was in uniform; and whether, if so, he will represent to the Company the illegality of the proceeding?

*Mr. BURT (who replied) said: The Board of Trade communicated with the Railway Company, and have received a reply which I shall be happy to show the hon. and gallant Member. It appears that the Company did not refuse to carry the man by the express boat, but declined to carry him at the military fare. The difference has since been repaid him.

THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what measures he has adopted to deal with the extraordinary destitution prevailing amongst the inhabitants of the Arran Islands?

Mr. J. MORLEY: A great number of questions have been put to me from time to time on this subject, and as great interest is taken in it in Ireland and in this country, perhaps the House will indulge me a rather long answer. Early in February last a meeting was held in the South Island of Arran. As a result a Memorial was forwarded to me by the late parish priest, Rev. P. J. McPhilpan, addressed to the Congested Districts Board, praying for relief works. That Memorial was brought before the Congested Districts Board, and at the same time I took immediate steps to inquire into the condition of the people. I found from inquiries made on the spot that while a number of the Killeany villagers who depend on hand-line fishing, and the people of Inisheer, who are the poorest in the islands, were, as in the best of years, badly off, there was no cause to apprehend actual want, and that taking the people of the islands generally they were comparatively well off; they had a very successful Spring and Autumn fishing season; the price of kelp was better than for some years past, and they had reared a very large number of pigs and sold them at high prices. Since that date representations of various kinds have been made to the Irish Government. The islands were visited by a member of the Local Government Board, and subsequently by a Local Government Inspector, who spent several days on the islands, and made careful inquiries into the condition of the people, and as to the existing arrangements for relief should sudden necessity arise. The relieving officer has at his disposal means for providing outdoor relief, and the Inspector has instructed him as to his responsibilities and his duties and his power in the matter. There was no reason to apprehend "deaths by starvation" as was alleged. Early in the present month some evictions occurred arising out of ejectment decrees issued in 1893, some 38 families were at that time converted into the position of caretakers; 23 families arranged with the agent by paying, it is said, two years' rent and £4 cost in each case, 12 families were evicted, and in three cases the proceedings were postponed indefinitely. The Inspector visited 11 of these families at the time on the North Island, and satisfied himself—and he is a very competent officer—that they had shelter afforded them by their neighbours, either in out-houses fitted up as dwelling houses or, in some instances, in the abodes of their neighbours. These families, on the report of the relieving officer that they might possibly be destitute, were afforded provisional relief pending the ordinary meeting of the Board of Guardians—the Galway Board. The remaining nine families have all of them more or less the means of support. The cases of these evicted tenants subsequently came before the Galway Board on the 11th of this month, with the result that, in the case of four families, outdoor relief was sanctioned by the Board for a month. In two of the cases the Guardians did not consider that the applicants were deserving of outdoor relief. This morning I received the following information, which concludes what I have to say. There are in the Arran Islands 530 families, consisting of 3,521 persons at the present moment; 41 families, comprising 89 persons, are receiving outdoor relief. This includes food, lodging, and such medical attendance as may be necessary, and all those persons are receiving provisions in the way of food. There are, roughly speaking, 40 or 50 families, comprising 150 people, in addition to the 41 families referred to, who are living on credit or on their neighbours at the present moment. Under ordinary circumstances of weather and season the extreme pressure on these unfortunate islanders will be over in a month. Money for kelp and cattle, as well as returns from fishing, may all be expected about the end of May, at which time also the principal fair for the island will be held. The relieving officer has received careful instructions that, whenever necessary, relief should be at once given. The question of providing seed potatoes has been all along admitted a proper and an important one. I brought the matter under the consideration of the Congested Districts Board, who found, however, that they had no power to either provide seed potatoes free or by way of loan, their powers being restricted to giving them for cash and at cost price. It has been estimated that a sum of £130, while not, of course, sufficient to admit of a change of seed being given to all the occupiers of small holdings in the islands, would enable a substantial amount, say five or six cwt., to be given to those landholders who just at present have a difficulty in procuring a supply out of their own resources. It seemed to me impracticable to ask Parliament to make a special Vote for this small amount, and while further considering the matter, my hon. Friend the Member for East Northamptonshire kindly on his own motion started a subscription. He has already remitted the sum of £80 to the clergyman of the islands, and, as the rev. gentleman has already started a fund, there ought to be no difficulty in withdrawing from it a sum of, say, £50 to make up the £130 required. I have to add that, in order to make quite sure, I directed yesterday an Inspector of the Local Government Board to cross to the island and report to me to-morrow; and if it is thought desirable by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire, and the trustees of the other funds, the Inspector will proceed to distribute them, as instructions will be given him so to do. I think there is really no ground whatever for charging the Government in the discharge of their duty with any callousness in connection with the relief of these unfortunate people; and I hope what has been done by voluntary effort, with the assistance of the local relieving officer, will meet all the exigencies of what I admit to be a very painful case.

Mr. SEXTON: I should be sorry to charge the Government with callousness or neglect, but I observe that in the sketch of the situation which the right hon. Gentleman has given he does not refer to the greater probability of want this year owing to the failure of the potato crop last year, and I would ask him whether he does not think that in his estimate of the means of subsistence he may not be too sanguine owing to the fact that the ordinary supply of food from the last crop may not be forthcoming? I would further ask him whether he would not call the attention of the Congested Districts Board to the necessity of starting reproductive works, such as the construction of new roads and the building of boat-slips?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not think the question of the making of roads is one in which the Congested Districts Board could very well interfere at present. They would, first of all, have to obtain the consent of the Presentment Sessions and of the Grand Jury. They have already spent a sum of £370 in improving the water supply of the island. I have had under consideration whether they could not start some small road-making, and some other kind of small works, as conditions upon the receipt of relief.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that representations have reached me, and I think communicated to himself, that the supply of seed potatoes is insufficient?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Our information is that £130 would meet the necessities of the case; and as my hon. Friend has very handsomely authorised an expenditure of £80, I hope the other fund will produce the £50 required to meet the wants of the situation.

THE DRUMSHANBO STATIONMASTER.

Mr. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the case of Mr. P. Melvin, the stationmaster at Drumshanbo, on the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway, who is about being dismissed by the Directors because on Good Friday he attended a meeting of the Company's *employés* in Ballinamore and joined a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants; and whether, as this railway is subsidised by an annual grant from the Treasury, he will represent to the Directors the advisability of granting to their *employés* the same freedom of legitimate combination as is accorded by the other Railway Companies in the country?

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): At the same time, will the right hon. Gentleman say whether he is aware that Mr. W. H. M'Adoo, Manager of the Cavan, Leitrim, and Roscommon Light Railway, dismissed Mr. Patrick Melvin from the post of stationmaster at Drumshanbo in consequence of the latter having joined a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Workers recently established at Ballinamore, County Leitrim; and whether, as this railway line is subsidised by the State, he will order an inquiry into the circumstances connected with the dismissal of Melvin ?

*Mr. BURT (who replied) said : I will reply to the questions of the hon. Members for North and South Leitrim together. The Board of Trade have received a communication from the Company in which they deny that the stationmaster at Drumshanbo was dismissed because he joined a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Workers. The Company add that nine-tenths of their men have joined the Society, and that no difference is made in their treatment by the Company. It is hardly correct to say that the line is subsidised by the State. The Treasury contribution is made to the Baronies not to the Company. The Board of Trade have no power to order an inquiry into the matter.

FATAL ACCIDENTS TO PLATELAYERS.

Mr. CHANNING : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the recent fatal accidents to platelayers near Waterloo Station on the South Western Railway, at Child's Hill Station on the Midland Railway, at Hammerton Street Junction on the Great Northern Railway, and elsewhere, and to recent fatal accidents to goods guards, inspectors, and others in crossing the lines of railways ; and whether, having regard to the frequency of such fatal accidents, he will direct representations to be made to the Railway Companies as to further amendment of their Rules for the protection of platelayers and others obliged by their duties to be upon or to cross the lines, and as to the better enforcing of existing Rules ?

*Mr. BURT (who replied) said : Yes, Sir. The President of the Board of Trade has seen the reports of the specific cases referred to. He feels considerable difficulty in putting pressure on the Railway Companies to revise the Rules which control the duties of their servants. Such a course may involve the Board of Trade in a very undesirable measure of responsibility in regard to railway management. The attention of the Railway Association will, however, be directed to the terms of my hon. Friend's question.

Mr. CHANNING: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Board of Trade have made representations to the Railway Association on other matters with very good effect? Could not similar representations be made in the interests of the platelayers ?

Mr. BURT : Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put the question to my right hon. Friend when he returns to the House.

PRIVATE BILL REPORTS.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield) : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, with a view to materially shortening the Reports on Bills committed to the Select Committee on Police and Sanitary Regulations, the column headed "Short Description of Clause" may not without disadvantage be omitted ?

*Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE : I have consulted those cognisant of this subject, and have come to the conclusion that the short description of clauses in the Reports on the Bills referred to could not be omitted without some inconvenience to Members who may have to refer to them.

BURIAL BOARDS AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS : I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will lay upon the Table of the House the statement lately prepared by the Board, showing the effect of "The Local Government Act, 1894," as regards Burial Boards ?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE : I will confer with my hon. Friend as to the best mode of proceeding for securing the object he has in view.

BETTISFIELD RAILWAY COLLISION.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Major Yorke on the collision which occurred on the 5th of March at Bettisfield Station on the Cambrian Railway, in which he draws attention to the booked hours of two drivers—namely, Driver Williams, who booked on at 8.30 a.m., on the 5th of March, to work till 8.45 p.m., and Driver Griffiths, who booked on at 9.30 a.m. to 9.10 p.m., their hours of duty 12 hours 15 minutes and 11 hours 50 minutes respectively, and expresses his opinion that these hours are too long for any driver ; and if he intends to take any steps to make the Cambrian Railway Company shorten the hours worked by their drivers, in terms of "The Hours of Labour (Railway Servants) Act, 1893"?

Mr. BURT (who replied) said: Yes, Sir; the Board of Trade have already communicated with the Railway Company in the terms of the Act referred to.

POLICE AT EVICTIONS IN IRELAND.

Mr. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the police, when their assistance is asked in cases of eviction in Ireland, keep any record of the sums paid or demanded for costs, and the nature of the costs alleged to have been incurred; whether he is aware that Bridget M'Govern, a widow, tenant of a small mountain holding in the townland of Tullycrofton, County Cavan, has paid to the agent, Mr. R. H. Johnstone, of Bawnboy, within the past two years and a quarter, four years' rent, together with sums demanded for costs amounting to nearly three years' rent; whether he is aware that no account of the costs alleged to have been incurred, and no receipt for the sums paid as costs, was given to her; whether the costs claimed included the costs of a summons to Petty Sessions to obtain possession in 1892, though no such summons was served on the tenant, and who were the Magistrates who made the order for possession; and whether there is any record from which he can say, approximately, in how many cases Mr. Johnstone has ordered, as landlord or agent, legal proceedings against tenants in the County Cavan within the past two years?

Mr. J. MORLEY: In cases of evictions the police, when practicable, ascertain and note the amount but not the nature of the costs alleged to have been incurred. The police report that the facts are correctly stated in the second and third paragraphs. It appears that the rent is only paid up to the 1st of May, 1888, and that from May, 1882, to March, 1892, only three and a-half years' rent was paid. I am informed that the costs claimed did not include the costs of a summons to Petty Sessions; and that the tenant was not summoned or decreed for possession of the farm at Petty Sessions in 1892. There is no record from which the information indicated in the concluding paragraph could be supplied.

MOONLIGHTING OUTRAGES IN IRELAND.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the total number of moonlighting outrages in Ireland between the 22nd of August, 1892, and the 31st of March, 1894, distinguishing between agrarian and non-agrarian cases?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The total number of such outrages in the period mentioned was 129, of which 55 were agrarian and 74 non-agrarian cases.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for the actual strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary on the 22nd of August, 1892, and at the present date?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Exclusive of officers and head constables, in whose numbers there is practically no variation, the actual strength of the Constabulary on the 22nd of August, 1892, was 11,764, and on the 31st of March, 1894, 11,652 men. The strength of the Force on this date could not be given with accuracy at such short notice.

ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the authorities at Enfield Small Arms Factory have informed several of the workmen that if they take part in any public meeting respecting factory affairs they will be dismissed; and whether this prohibition applies to all matters appertaining to the working of the factory; and, if not, what subjects are exempted from its application?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certain workmen have been cautioned that participation in public meetings for the discussion of the policy of the Department in the management of its factories is inconsistent with all discipline, and with the proper working of the establishment. They have been warned that it constitutes a virtual breach of the Rule against making complaints through any but the proper channel, infringement of which Rule leads to dismissal. Every workman has full right of appeal to his superintendent in the case of a personal grievance, but it would be impossible to allow workmen to take part with outsiders in publicly discussing and remonstrating against the general conduct of the business of the Department.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE: Are not the men referred to citizens entitled to vote, and, as such, are they not at liberty to discuss questions of public policy?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certainly, as citizens, they are entitled to discuss questions of public policy; but it is obviously impossible to allow workmen in the factory to discuss questions concerning the business of the factory. For instance, take the particular case of a meeting held lately to discuss, on *ex parte* evidence entirely, the allocation of work to the Department. This brings the workmen into a position of antagonism with those who control the Department, which would cause great inconvenience.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE: Does the prohibition apply to the meetings held after the men have performed their day's work?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I suppose they could not very well attend a meeting while their work was going on.

TRACERS IN THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Mr. KEIR-HARDIE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has received a Memorial, signed by a large number of second-class tracers attached to the Receiver and Accountant General's Office, in which a number of grievances and hardships were recited, with a prayer for their redress; and whether the prayer of the Petition has been granted, or what action does he propose to take in connection therewith?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Yes; I have received several Memorials from the Tracing Staff of the Receiver and Accountant General's Branch of my Department, which have all been answered with the exception of the last one, which was only received last month, and to that an official reply will be sent to the Memorialists through the usual channel, with no unnecessary delay.

VESTRY MEETINGS.

Mr. THORNTON: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Widnes Division of Lancashire, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it fulfils the requirements of the Local Government Act of 1894 to pass a resolution at the annual Vestry meetings for township business, of which meetings 14 days' notice has not been given, for the division of the parish into wards?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Having regard to the provisions in Sections 18 (1) and 84 (3) of the Local Government Act, it appears to the Local Government Board that a resolution passed by the inhabitants of the parish in Vestry assembled, after the usual notice for a Vestry meeting, is sufficient, and that 14 days' notice of the meeting is not, therefore, required.

BOYCOTTING AT KELLS.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S): On behalf of the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the several meetings reported to have been recently held for the purpose of effectually boycotting a gentleman at Kells for having taken a vacant farm; whether he is aware that at such meetings resolutions have been passed denouncing this gentleman, and calling up the people in the neighbourhood to boycott him; whether the trade and business of this gentleman have suffered; and whether it is intended to take any steps to put an end to such boycotting?

Mr. J. MORLEY: On the 2nd instant I replied very fully to a question addressed to me by the hon. and learned Gentleman, which is practically identical with the further question now put. I have nothing to add to that reply, except to say that, so far as the Inspector General is aware, there has been no change in the position of Bradley, and that, as I stated in my reply of the 2nd instant, the police, by my special directions, are using the greatest possible vigilance to prevent any acts of intimidation in the case.

THE CORK MURDER.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for Dublin University, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the murder of Donovan, the caretaker of an evicted farm at Newmarket, County Cork, whether, at the date of the murder, Donovan was under any special police protection; whether he had been previously, and if so, up to what date, under special police protection; and whether any special police protection previously afforded had been withdrawn from him, and, if so, upon what grounds?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspector General informs me that Donovan was specially protected by police patrols, and that he had been under this form of protection down to the date of his murder. The reply to the third paragraph is in the negative.

MR. DANE: Will any provision be made for the two infant orphans of Donovan?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer that question until I have received a full Report.

SUPERANNUATION OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education when he will lay before the House the Report of the Departmental Committee on the superannuation of elementary teachers; and when the decision of the Government thereupon may be expected?

MR. ACLAND: The actuaries upon the Departmental Committee have been engaged for some time in preparing new tables. These tables, as the hon. Baronet is aware, are of a very complicated character. As soon as they are complete the Committee will resume its sittings, and I hope they will be able to report within the next few months.

NAVAL COURTS MARTIAL.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is intended to remove the disabilities of officers of the Royal Marines in respect of their exclusion from Naval Courts Martial; and whether an undertaking to remove these disabilities was recently given by the Admiralty?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The question whether Marine officers should be members of Naval Courts Martial has recently been brought under our notice by other hon. Members, and Lord Spencer has called for Papers and information on the whole subject, which he will shortly examine; meanwhile, no answer can be given. The Board of Admiralty has never passed any Minute in favour of an alteration; nor could such a change be made except by passing a Bill to amend the Naval Discipline Act.

EXPENDITURE ON BARRACKS.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what amount of the £4,500,000 voted under the Barracks Act remained unexpended on the 31st of March, 1894; and what is the estimated expenditure under the Act in the present financial year?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The amount taken under the Barrack Act of 1890 was £4,100,000. Of this, £2,364,000 remained unexpended on March 31, 1894. The expenditure during the current financial year is estimated at £700,000.

THE LADIES' GALLERY.

MR. W. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, in view of the many representations that have been made to him in reference to the grating in front of the Ladies' Gallery, he can see his way to order its removal?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: This is a subject which has frequently been brought to the notice of the House. I have had so many pressing appeals from hon. Members, as well as from occupants of the Gallery in question, that I propose, subject to the general approval of the House, and by way of experiment, to remove the central section of the grating; that is to say, one-third of the whole.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that in former days many Divisions took place in the House on this very subject, and has he considered whether it would be in accordance with precedent that the grating should be removed without taking the opinion of the House?

SIR D. MACFARLANE: Will the hon. Gentleman refer this question to the Committee which is about to be appointed before coming to any decision?

MR. TOMLINSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there are very many ladies who prefer the grating to remain?

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): May I ask how will the right hon. Gentleman decide as to the ladies who are to occupy the central position?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: Hon. Members will observe that in my answer I said that this proposal was subject to the general approval of the House. I have had an immense number of pressing appeals; but, of course, if there is anything like disagreement on the subject, it must be referred to the judgment of the House. I will undertake, however, that nothing shall be done until the House has fully considered the matter.

SIR D. MACFARLANE: Are we to understand that the question will be referred to the Committee before the decision is taken?

MR. BARTLEY: Will the Leader of the House grant us a day to discuss it?

*MR. H. GLADSTONE: It is a question on which hon. Members are able to make up their minds, and I do not think it is one which could be advanced by examination before a Committee.

THE BEHRING SEA AWARD ACT.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether any, and if so what, steps have been taken to notify the sealing vessels that are now at sea with lawful clearances to seal in the North Pacific Ocean, that the necessary legislative sanction has now been obtained for a close season in Behring Sea to commence on the 1st of May next; and whether arrests are to be permitted of vessels which have not been so notified?

*SIR E. GREY: The provisions of the Award of the Tribunal of Arbitration which this country and the United States were bound to carry out were matters of common knowledge in August last, but every possible means will be taken to give to sealers now at sea specific warning that the Regulations will be enforced, and two of Her Majesty's ships have been sent to the sealing grounds for that purpose. Any British or United States vessel contravening the provisions of the Behring Sea Award Act, 1894, will be liable to be arrested and sent to a British Court for trial.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I should like to ask the hon. Baronet what provision, if any, will be made for the case of those sealers who infringe the Act without having had any knowledge of or warning concerning it?

*SIR E. GREY said, he thought such cases were scarcely likely to occur. It was well known such an Act was to be passed, and that it was the intention of both Governments to enforce the Award, the terms of which were made public, and, therefore, it was hardly possible any sealers could have started in ignorance of the provisions of them.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then what is the use of sending men-of-war in search of the sealers to inform them?

*SIR E. GREY: It is always desirable that in these matters the Government should take every precaution in its power to prevent any possible misunderstanding, however slight the chance of it may be.

THE PROPERTY TAX.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the deduction of one-sixth he is understood to propose to allow in assessments of houses to the Income Tax or Property Tax, under Schedule (A), will in cases where the houses are let at a rent which includes rates (which rates the landlord therefore pays) be in addition to the present deduction allowed in making the assessment in respect of such rates; and if the proposed allowance of one-sixth will in the cases mentioned be on the gross rental or on the rental after deducting rates?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): Where the landlord pays the rates this fact is taken into consideration in the Income Tax assessment, which, in such cases, is based on the rent, after making allowance for the rates. The reduction of one-sixth will be upon the Income Tax assessment.

VISITS OF FOREIGN OFFICERS TO ENGLISH DOCKYARDS.

MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the fact that two Members of the French Chamber of

Deputies and of the Committee appointed to inquire into the condition of the French Navy, attended by a French Naval Attaché, and accompanied on the part of the Admiralty by the Assistant Director of Torpedoes and the Inspector of Dockyard Accounts, visited Portsmouth Dockyard on the 20th instant, and, under the superintendence of Rear Admiral Fane, inspected the vessels under construction and went over the torpedo and Naval supply stores; and whether equal facilities of inspecting vessels and torpedoes are afforded alike by France and other Foreign Powers to representatives of this country?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this question. In compliance with a request from the French Government, conveyed through the French Ambassador, two Members of the French Chamber of Deputies being Members of a Naval Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, were conducted over the dockyard and stores at Portsmouth as stated in the question. Similar facilities are afforded alike by France and other Powers to representatives of this country, and every courtesy is invariably extended to our Naval Attachés, and any special representatives visiting foreign dockyards.

THE BUDGET PROPOSALS.

Mr. COLSTON (Gloucester, Thornbury): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the 10 per cent. proposed to be deducted from the rental of land for purposes of Income Tax assessment will be equally applicable to tithe rent-charge?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Where the tithe rent-charge is included in the assessment of the land, the owner of the land will have the benefit of the 10 per cent. reduction on the whole assessment, including the tithe rent-charge. The owner of the tithe rent-charge in that case, as well as in the case where he is directly assessed, will remain in the same position as he is in at present.

Mr. BRODRICK: Will he receive any relief?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Certainly not; he is not entitled to it.

Mr. BRODRICK: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state what has been the capital value of property on which probate has been granted, and the annual value of real estate returned for Succession Duty in the last five years; and what is the estimated capital value of real estate to be charged with Estate Duty annually for the future?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The hon. Member will find the figures he asks for at page 22 of the Appendix to the 36th Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

Mr. BRODRICK: Does that refer to the question in the last paragraph?

Sir W. HARCOURT: No; I cannot answer that paragraph.

Mr. BRODRICK: Is the House to accept the right hon. Gentleman's estimate as not being based on any capital figure?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is based on a capital figure, and I have given it.

Mr. BRODRICK: I am sorry to trouble the right hon. Gentleman, but unless the figure on which the estimate is made is guess work, is the House to understand that the figures are not readily accessible. Are we to have no means of estimating the amount paid by agricultural land?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The hon. Member must form his own conclusion from the particulars I have indicated.

Mr. BRODRICK: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what sum the interest at 3 per cent. on Estate Duty, charged on real estate, is estimated to amount annually, supposing that on all agricultural properties the payments are spread over eight years?

Sir W. HARCOURT: This is a question founded on an hypothesis on which the hon. Member is just as capable of forming an estimate as I am. The interest is so collected as to be equivalent on the whole to the principal sum which is originally charged.

Mr. BRODRICK: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that settled property which has paid Probate Duty before the passing of the Budget Bill 1894 will not be charged with Estate Duty under that Bill till the settlement expires, he will state whether real estate which has already paid Succession Duty under the same conditions will be relieved from Estate Duty for the same period?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The two cases are not parallel. Probate Duty is paid in respect of the capital value of the estate; but Succession Duty is only paid on the life interest of the successor, and no allowance can be made in respect of it when the successor dies, and the interest in respect of which the duty was paid is therefore wholly exhausted.

Mr. BRODRICK: Are we, then, to understand that although both classes of property have paid duty hitherto, relief is to be now given to settled personalty and not to settled land?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It has nothing at all to do with the different character of the property; it is the question of the difference in the permanence of it.

PRISON OFFICERS' PENSIONS.

Mr. MILDMAY (Devon, Totnes): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in accordance with their Petition, he will reconsider the possibility of assimilating the conditions under which prison officers retire from the Public Service to those prevalent in the Police Force?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL (who replied) said: The case of warders cannot properly be compared with that of the police, whose health is affected by constant exposure to the weather, and especially by night duty in the open air. In 1891 the Prison Warders Committee, after inquiry into the claim of the warders for a higher scale of pension, declined to recommend any increase, and in view of this decision I am unable to propose to Parliament the alteration in the law which would be necessary to enable the Treasury to make any alteration in the present scale of ordinary pensions.

THE REGISTRATION BILL.

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government is in possession of any information which enables him to state or to estimate the number of electors who, being entitled to exercise the franchise created by 2 Will. 4, c. 45, s. 27, and also to vote under 30 & 31 Vic. c. 102, or under 48 & 49 Vic. c. 3, will be affected in respect of their right to vote by the provisions of the Bill introduced by him on the 13th instant?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am advised that that portion of s. 27 of 2 & 3 Will. 4, c. 45, which conferred the right to vote, was repealed by the Act of 1884 (48 & 49 Vic. c. 3), and was not re-enacted by that Act. But that Act by s. 5 conferred a right to vote on the occupier of a £10 tenement or land. There is no possibility of estimating the number of £10 occupiers who will be affected by Clause 1 of the Registration Bill. It will probably be very small, as the larger number of voters come on the Register as inhabitant occupiers. This will be observed from a reference to the Parliamentary Electors Return for England and Wales recently issued, which shows that while the total number of electors was 4,846,000, of these the lodgers numbered 143,000 only.

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Has the Leader of the House any statement to make relative to the course of business?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I hope the Motion for the introduction of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill may be allowed to go through to-night. ["No, no!"] Well, if it is not, it must be taken again on Monday; and I should propose on Friday to dispose of the question of the Scotch Committee, as I hope that the proposals which we have to make will remove any difficulties on that head. After that we shall take the introduction of the Scotch Local Government Bill, and then, for the main business of the week, the Second Reading of the Registration Bill. Then we desire also in next week to get the Second Reading of the Scotch Local Government Bill, to which I do not imagine there will be any serious opposition, and which, if agreed to, will go to a Committee upstairs. The week after will be mainly devoted to the Second Reading of the Budget Bill. That is the general view of the Government as to the arrangement of business, and I should be glad, subject to that arrangement, if I should be able to find time for a day for the question of Uganda. I do not know how much time may be taken up by the discussion on the Budget Bill, but I hope, if it is not much protracted, to give a day or two for ordinary effective Supply. That is the general view, but it is, of course, subject to alteration.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Are we to understand that the Evicted Tenants Bill will not be taken before Whitsuntide?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I think it will be impossible to do that. It must be clearly understood what business the Government think it essential to take. It is the main intention of the Government to take the Scotch Bill, the Registration Bill, and the Budget Bill.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants Bill be taken before the Committee on the Budget Bill? Have the Government formed any intention as to the course of dealing with the Bill after Whitsuntide?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am afraid I cannot at this moment make any further statement. I may be able to do so next week.

MOTION.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): In rising to make the Motion which stands in my name, to ask for leave to introduce a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the temporalities thereof, I do not propose to enter for more than a moment upon the general considerations which affect the question of the maintenance of the Established Church in Wales. The unmistakable evidence which was given at the last General Election of the opinion of the large majority of the Welsh people on this subject in the return of no less than 31 out of 34 Members pledged to disestablishment—an opinion which was ratified by the Division which took place in this House last Session on the introduction of the Suspensory Bill, when the First Reading of that Bill was carried by a majority of over 50—is to us a sufficient and conclusive indication both of local opinion, and of the opinion of the House of Commons on the general principles affecting this question. These are matters which may be fitly debated, and which, I doubt not, will be debated at becoming length and amplitude, when we come to consider the Second Reading of the Bill. I will content myself now with saying, in two or three sentences, what our view upon this question is. The Church of England in Wales is the Church of a comparatively small minority of the people. It is as a Church—I do not speak of it as a religion, but as a Church — associated in the minds of the bulk of the Welsh people with injurious and, indeed, I may say with humiliating memories. It is to them, and has long been, although it calls itself and is in law a national institution, a symbol, not of national unity, but of national discord. It has had at its side for generations past the social influence, the political power, and the great bulk of the wealth and property of the country, and the control—I might almost say the monopoly—of education and culture. It has in these later years enlisted in its service a still more potent auxiliary in the zeal, devotion, and self-sacrifice, both of its ministers and of its members. Yet, Sir, it remains to-day what it has been for more than a century past—an institution which is not accepted as a national institution by the vast bulk of the people, by whom it is regarded as an aggressive sectarian power, singled out by the State from among a number of competing and rival religious agencies as a special object of State favour, and settled by the State in the exclusive enjoyment of what they regard as a special patrimony of the people. I do not wish to argue the general question here; I merely state the position [*Opposition laughter and ironical cheers*] as it presents itself to us; and, in answer to those cheers, I can assure hon. Members that we are perfectly prepared when the fitting time comes, as it will come when this Bill is presented for Second Reading, to go over the whole of the ground and to maintain every one of the propositions that I have laid down to-day. My function to-day in asking for leave to introduce a Bill is not to argue the general question, but to state the plan which the Government propose to submit to the House for dealing, in a practical and effective way, with the settlement of the question. The first question to which I wish to call attention is as to the area over which the process of disestablishment and disendowment ought to be carried. We propose, of course, to include in the Bill the 12 counties which constitute in point of law the Principality of Wales; and we propose further, as the title of the Motion I am about to make shows, to add to these the County of Monmouth. I do not know that that addition requires either justification or even explanation. The district that now constitutes the County of Monmouth is part of what was anciently called the Welsh Marches. It was created into an English county, in so far, that is to say, as it ever has been an English county—in the reign of Henry VIII., but it has always remained what it was from the first, predominantly Welsh in the habits, the sentiments, and the general character of the people. That fact was recognised recently, when the gentlemen opposite sat on this side of the House, in a measure, which was assented to by the Government of the day, namely, the Intermediate Education Act of 1889. In that important matter—a matter peculiarly Welsh, and one affecting Wales as distinct from England—Monmouthshire was expressly included within the scope of the Bill. I may further remind the House in regard to the particular matter before us that the whole County of Monmouth is included in the Welsh diocese of Llandaff. Therefore, I think that no further argument is needed to justify a Bill affecting Welsh disestablishment embracing Monmouthshire as well as Wales. The adoption of this area will necessitate a rearrangement of the existing state of things in two important respects. In the first place, there are a number of parishes belonging to English dioceses that are wholly included, geographically, in Wales; but, on the other hand, there are a number of parishes belonging to Welsh dioceses which are wholly situated in England. We propose to follow in this Bill the geographical and not the diocesan boundary where the two are not coincident. I think, if we adopted any other plan, we should give rise to a state of things, whatever may be the opinions entertained with reference to these proposals, which would be recognised both by opponents and by supporters of the Established Church as intolerable. You would have in that case a number of oases—disestablished parishes in England and established parishes in Wales. But it is necessary, in order to carry into effect the intentions of this measure, to have the whole of the territory included within the geographical boundary of Wales and Monmouthshire under one state of the law, and the other territory as at present under another state of the law. For this purpose the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be required to make the necessary redistribution of parishes. For such a step I may point out that there is abundant precedent. For example, there is the Act of the Ecclesiastical Commission, passed in 1836, which gave them such powers; and the Act of 1847, which dealt with the Bishoprics of St. Asaph, Bangor, and Manchester. There is also the Act of 1878, which provided for the creation of new Bishoprics and empowered them expressly to make such a redistribution of areas as was necessary to give effect to the intentions of the Legislature. I may state at once what the result of this change will be. There are at present 12 Welsh parishes with a total population of 6,600 persons, and with an aggregate valuation, ecclesiastically, of some £2,350, which are now included in the English dioceses of Hereford, Chester, and Lichfield, and which, under the state of things brought into operation by this Bill, will become subject to the Act of Disestablishment and Disendowment. On the other hand, there are 14 English parishes with a total population of 20,600, and an aggregate yearly ecclesiastical valuation of £4,800, which are now included in the Welsh diocese of St. Asaph, and which, in consequence of the arrangement we propose, will be transferred to English dioceses, and will not be, therefore, subject to this Act. That is the first rearrangement found necessary. But there is a second class of boundary adjustments, if I may so call them, which will have to be carried into effect. There are a number of border parishes cutting the geographical boundary between England and Wales, and situated partly in the one country and partly in the other. In the diocese of Chester there are two such parishes, in that of Hereford 10, and in that of St. Asaph three, making a total of 15 border parishes, which together contain a population of some 7,000. As to these, we propose that the Welsh Commissioners to be appointed under this Bill shall have full power to determine—having due regard to such facts as the population, the situation of the parish church, and the other special circumstances of each case—whether a particular parish is to be treated as wholly within or wholly without Wales; and as that is a question which may very probably give rise to local feelings and great differences of opinion, we propose that any order made by the Welsh Commissioners on the subject shall be a matter which, if anyone wishes it, shall be subject to the right of appeal to the Queen in Council. So much for the area with which the Bill proposes to deal. I now come to the date of disestablishment. In this matter we propose to follow the precedent of the Irish Church Act of 1869, and postpone the commencement of the Act until there has been a reasonable time for the Church on the one side and on the other side for the Local and Central Authorities charged with or interested in the administration of the new state of things to accommodate themselves to the situation, and to make such arrangements as are necessary. I do not know whether I shall be considered as over sanguine if I assume that this Bill will pass into law in the course of the present Session. At any rate, for the purposes of to-day's explanation, I am going to make that assumption, and if it is realised, the date we have put in the Bill as the date of disestablishment, and therefore as the date on which the new arrangements are to take effect, is January 1, 1896. In other words, our proposal is this. We shall give from whatever date the Bill passes into law a year, or rather more than a year, for the different persons and Public Bodies concerned to adapt themselves to the new situation. During the transitional state of things which will exist between the passing of the Act and the actual date of disestablishment, provision has, of course, to be made for carrying on the work of the Church. On the one hand, it is desirable and obviously necessary and right that the machinery of the Church should not be brought to a deadlock and its organisation fettered or seriously crippled, whilst, on the other hand, it is equally desirable that no new vested interest should be allowed to come in and hamper the work of disestablishment and disendowment. We propose, therefore, to do what was done in 1869 in the case of the Irish Church, to make provision for the case of vacant Bishoprics. Under this Bill, the Bishops are to be appointed by the Crown, but only on the recommendation of the Archbishop of Canterbury or three Welsh Bishops, and the new Bishops so appointed are not to be entitled to sit in the House of Lords. As to the various livings that fall vacant during that time, we propose to fill them up as now, and by means of the same constitutional authorities; but while clergymen so appointed will continue to hold their appointments down to the date of disestablishment, the emoluments attached to their several benefices will not be treated as having created any existing interests in their favour for the purposes of compensation at the time whenever disestablishment comes into effect. I now come to the nature of disestablishment itself. Supposing the date I have named as the possible one for disestablishment to have arrived, I will try to explain as briefly as I can what will be the effect of the Act on the status, as distinguished from the property, of the Church and its officers. By the first clause of the Bill, from that date, the Church of England, so far as it is established by law in Wales and Monmouthshire, the Church that is which is referred to in the Bill as the Church of Wales, will cease to be so established. All rights of patronage, public or private, are from that date to be extinguished, and all ecclesiastical corporations, sole or aggregate, are to be dissolved. No Bishop of the Church of Wales is to be summoned from that time onwards to sit in the House of Lords, although, of course, the existing Bishops, although disqualified in one sense, will retain their present titles and precedence, and the necessary number of Bishops will be made up from the English Bishops who have at present no seats. That, shortly stated, is the effect of disestablishment as distinguished from disendowment. I will now say a few words as to the status of the disestablished Church. We propose that the present ecclesiastical law in Wales and Monmouthshire shall cease from that time to exist as law. The Ecclesiastical Courts will no longer have any coercive jurisdiction. No appeals will any further be permitted from those Courts to the

Queen in Council. Convocation, which is a Common Law body not created by Statute, but purely a clerical body with no power by law to alter its own constitution, and no power to act in any matter except by authority from the Crown—Convocation will have to be modified in its composition and constitution by the fact that the Bishops and clergy of the Welsh Church, having ceased to enjoy the legal status which they at present possess, will no longer be qualified to sit or be represented in it. But we have provided, as it was necessary to provide, that the powers of Convocation as a Common Law body, so far as they relate to matters outside Wales and Monmouthshire, are not to be affected or impaired by the withdrawal of the Welsh Bishops and clergy from it. So far I have spoken only of what I may call the disabling effects of the Bill on the status of the disestablished Church; I come now to the empowering provisions which we propose to enact. Following the precedent again of the Irish Act of 1869, we propose that the present articles, doctrines, discipline, and ordinances of the Church of England shall continue, so far as the Church in Wales is concerned, until they are modified by an authority to which I will presently refer. They are to continue, of course, not with the force of law and not with any coercive sanction, but as binding on the members of the Church by the effect of mutual agreement. So far as they relate to property, and so long as that property continues to be enjoyed by virtue of the Act by officers or members of the Church, the obligation to hold the property in accordance with the articles, regulations, and discipline of the Church will be enforceable in the Temporal Courts just in the same way as though the property so enjoyed were held upon an express trust. The Bishops, clergy, and laity are to have power to hold Synods, and to frame constitutions for the government of the Church in Wales, either as a whole or according to the diocese. Finally, we propose to enable them to appoint a body to represent them, and to hold property on their behalf. That body, which is called in the Act the representative body of the Church in Wales, may, when it is constituted, be incorporated by the Queen as a Corporation, with power to hold property in land without licence in mortmain. That will be the position, and those will be the power and disabilities of the Church in Wales when disestablished.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Do you follow the Irish precedent?

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes; we do not incorporate the Irish Act, because it is by no means clear that the Church would see fit to exercise the power the measure would give them to appoint such a body. We follow the language and intention of the Irish Act, providing if and when the Welsh Church appoints such a body then they shall incorporate it. I pass now to a much more complicated and difficult question—the question of disendowment and the effect of the Bill upon the status and the property of the Church, as to which I am afraid I shall have to trespass considerably on the time and the indulgence of the House. I shall have to go into matters both as to principle and detail which would hardly be intelligible without a lengthy explanation. The preliminary question I will ask is, "What is the property in title, in kind, and in value with which we have to deal?" On the question of title I need hardly remind the House that the Church of England as a Church is not, in point of law, the owner of property of any sort or kind whatever. The Church is not a Corporation, and although it is a great spiritual, and has been a great political, power in this country, yet it is not recognised by law and is not capable of owning or exercising proprietary rights. All ecclesiastical property in this country, whether in England or in Wales, is an endowment of some particular benefice or office. That is a fact which is very familiar, though it is sometimes disguised from popular apprehension, particularly, I think, by the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as the House is aware, have, under their Acts and the powers given to them by the Legislature, succeeded to the ownership and occupation of a very large quantity of property, particularly capitular and episcopal property, in England and Wales. The income of that property goes into their common fund, which to a large extent, is not earmarked or specifically appropriated to any particular purpose, and out of that fund so composed the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are in the habit of making grants, sometimes fixed and sometimes variable, in support of endowments, both of sees or benefices. But the fact remains that the whole ecclesiastical property of this country is property annexed to and belonging to particular benefices, particular offices, and particular sees. That, I think, is a fact which it is most important to bear in mind, both in the description of the property, in the first instance, and next when we come to consider the best method of applying it. That being the nature of the title which the Church has to the property which its members enjoy, I have now to ask the House to consider what are the classes and what is the value of the property held or enjoyed by beneficed officers in Wales and Monmouthshire. I regret that information on this subject, so far as it is accessible to the public, is only to be gathered, and gathered in a somewhat fragmentary and imperfect manner, from two Returns—and, so far as I know, only two—made to this House within recent years. One is the Return of the revenues of the Church of England, laid on the Table of the House on June 23, 1891; and there is another short Return made by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, I think, on the Motion of my hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. T. E. Ellis), showing the income and grants in Wales, and dated May 6, 1889. I shall hope to present to the House, when the Bill is introduced, two additional Returns, one of which will be the summary of the first to which I have referred, so far as it relates to Wales and Monmouthshire, and another which will bring the second up to the present date. The first point I have to make clear is that you must distinguish carefully between the ecclesiastical revenues which arise from Wales and the ecclesiastical revenues which are handed over to and enjoyed by the Church in Wales. The House will presently see that they are two very distinct things. I begin first with the question of the ecclesiastical revenue derived from Wales. The Return divides this, as it does all the property of the Church, into two categories—ancient endowments, and what are called private benefactions since 1703. I shall have something to say later on as to these private benefactions, but for the moment I will omit the comparatively small sum of £13,600 a year, to which they amount, and it need not be seriously considered. The ancient endowments separate themselves into three classes. First of all, there are endowments of parochial benefices, which constitute the great bulk of the whole. The total gross proceeds of those endowments for Wales and Monmouthshire is £233,000 a year, and of this sum no less than £179,000 is derived from tithe-rent charge. The second class consists of endowments of cathedral and collegiate churches not transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and still directly received by the capitular bodies. They amount to the small sum of £3,360 a year. The third head of revenue derived from Wales is the income received by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. That amounts to a gross total for Wales and Monmouthshire of £42,300, of which £27,000 consists of tithe-rent charge. I must here point out that of this £42,300 paid over to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from Wales £12,500 goes at present to English bishoprics and chapters; it is money which is paid out of Wales and does not return to Wales. From the figures I have it appears that the total gross ecclesiastical income derived from Wales and Monmouthshire is £279,000; but that does not give the actual income of the Welsh Church. In the first place, it is a gross total from which probably not less than 25 per cent. ought to be deducted for the cost of collection and other things before we arrive at the net amount. It is further, as I have pointed out, diminished by £12,500 paid by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to English chapters and benefices. That is one side of the account. But on the other there is equally to be borne in mind that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners make grants in Wales out of their common fund very largely in excess of the sums paid over by them in England out of Welsh tithes on Welsh land. I am sorry to say that the figures are not in a condition to be presented to the House conveniently, because in one Return we are dealing with gross revenue, and in the second Return the Ecclesiastical Commissioners themselves were dealing with net revenue. The Return of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of 1889 shows a total net receipt by them from Wales of £28,700. That is to say, the gross sum £42,300 of which I spoke represents a net sum of £28,700. On the other hand, it shows a balance of payments by them to Wales of £67,600. In other words, there is a balance overpaid, if I may use the expression, out of the English Revenues to Wales of about £40,000 a year. I need not say that in the view of the Government that overpayment made to Wales cannot be treated as part of the property of the Welsh Church. I do not think that any of those who represent and strongly advocate the cause of disestablishment and disendowment in Wales are at all anxious to claim that sum. What they are anxious for, as I understand, is that everything at present derived from Wales in the shape of either income from land or tithe-rent charge, however appropriated now, shall be secured in the future for the benefit of Wales; and whatever in excess is paid over to Wales by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners shall go back to the source from which it comes and be at the disposal of the Revenues of the English Church. The result is, that the whole of that sum of £279,000 ought to be regarded as Welsh, though a part of it now goes to England; and, on the other hand, Wales must surrender to England —subject, of course, to existing interests—the additional sum of about £40,000 a year, by which the contribution of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to Wales exceeds what they receive from Wales. In order to give effect to that arrangement the Bill proposes as follows:—That as soon as the Act passes, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, who are also interested, shall, in the first place, ascertain what income vested in them arises from property situated in Wales and Monmouthshire. Having ascertained that, they are to cast upon this income the burden of paying the Welsh episcopal and capitular revenues, amounting to £32,800 a year, which is just about sufficiently met by the net income derived by the Commissioners from Wales, together with the endowments directly received by the Welsh capitular bodies to which I have already referred. The other payments now made by them to England out of Welsh property they will shift on to English property in their possession, with the result, of course, that the English Church and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as representing the Church, will, as the existing interests fall in, be the gainers to the extent of nearly £40,000 a year, while Wales will have charged on exclusively Welsh property the existing interests of both the Bishops and the Incumbents as long as they exist, and when these interests fall in, the whole of this property will be set free for appropriation to purely Welsh purposes. The general effect of that arrangement will be that we shall have two funds to deal with. In the first place, we shall have the endowments of parochial benefices in Wales, at present paid directly out of the tithe and land to the Incumbents, and amounting to a gross total of £233,000 a year. The second fund will be the endowments at present paid to the episcopal and capitular officers in Wales, which amounts, if added to the £42,300 received by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to a gross total of £45,660 a year. I will ask the House to bear in mind that we have these two funds to deal with— first, the local and parochial fund of £233,000 a year, representing the present income from benefices; and secondly, a central fund at present appropriated to the payment of Bishops and chapters which amount to £45,660. I now come to the more interesting question—How are we to deal with these funds? Before I explain our proposals to the House, I must say one or two words with reference to the Irish precedent, from which, as the House shortly will perceive, we propose in dealing with this question to make a somewhat wide departure. The object of the Irish Church Act, and the scheme of disendowment embodied in that Act, was to "wind up," if I may use a secular expression as applied to ecclesiastical affairs, the property of the Church by the machinery of liquidation. The Commissioners appointed under that Act were intended to be, and were, in fact, a merely temporary body appointed for a temporary purpose. Their business was, on the one side, to ascertain the liabilities, and on the other side to realise the assets of the Irish Church. As far as the liabilities were concerned, although in the first instance vested interests were provided for by giving to the holders of them life annuities, yet the scheme of the Act was that these annuities should be commuted by the payment of a capital sum to the representatives of the Church Body, which was then to make arrangements by mutual agreement between itself and the individual annuitants. And so anxious were the framers of the

Act to bring about that result, and to get rid of the system of annual payments by substituting a capital sum, that a bonus of no less than 12 per cent. was offered by the Act to every diocese in Ireland, in which no less than three-fourths of the clergy consented to commute their annuities before January 1, 1873. The House is aware from the returns of the Irish Church Commissioners that no diocese in Ireland proved able to resist that temptation; and in the case of every diocese the annuities were commuted before the time prescribed by the Act, and the bonuses were added to the capital sum. The result was that, as far as the liabilities of the State to the Church were concerned, before the expiration of four years from the passing of the Act, all the annuities were practically represented by one large capital sum. On the other hand, the Commissioners, acting under the powers and in pursuance of the intention of the Act, dealt in a similar manner with the assets. They realised the assets. The tithe rent-charge was offered, as it was bound to be by the Act, for redemption by the landowners on very favourable terms, with the result that the great bulk has been extinguished and is now represented by a capital sum. The land vested in the Commissioners was sold by them with a right of pre-emption to the occupying tenants. The result was that you had two lump sums—on the one hand, the capital value of the liabilities of the State to the Church Body in respect of dispossessed and disendowed Incumbents; and, on the other hand, the capital value realised by the sale of the tithe rent-charge and the land and of other assets of the Church. What has been the history of this transaction? The House need not be assured that I am not going to detain it by criticism or adverse comment on the policy of that Act. I do not doubt that under the circumstances of that time it was the best arrangement open to the Government. But the history of it does not encourage us to undertake similar operations. You have had now for nearly 25 years in Ireland, subject to the liability to repay compensation to the dispossessed clergy—you have had at the disposal of the Government and of Parliament a huge capital sum which has offered irresistible temptation in almost every emergency. It has constituted what I may call a kind of emergency reservoir, which has been tapped and drawn upon by successive Governments and Parliaments—and drawn upon not later than last week (or the last attenuated remnant of the fund at least) by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for a most legitimate and wise purpose. It has been drawn upon with such persistence, continuity, and effect that I believe I may honestly and accurately say that now, less than 25 years after the disendowment of the Irish Church, there is practically none of that sum available for any purpose whatever. I have here a list of the various successful attacks which have been made upon the Irish Church Fund. This is a history most pregnant in warning and instruction for the future. It began in 1878 with the Intermediate Education Act, which took £1,000,000; next year the National school-teachers took £1,300,000; in 1880, for the relief of distress, £1,250,000; in 1881, for arrears of rent, £950,000; and in the same year an annuity to the Royal University of £20,000 a year; in 1883, for distressed unions, £30,000; and in the same year, for sea fisheries, £200,000; in 1886, for poor relief and piers and roads, £20,000; and in 1891, for the Congested Districts Board, £1,500,000. In addition to this, you have the estimated capital charge of £600,000 for the annual grant to the Royal University, which makes a total, without counting the last grant made by my right hon. Friend, of £6,870,000, representing, I suppose, the whole of this surplus, which has been disposed of by Parliament in much less than a generation. I am not questioning either the policy of the original Act or the wisdom of each of these successive applications of the surplus; but, having to deal with a new case and having this history before our eyes, we have come to the conclusion that it would be wiser and more politic to adopt a different method. I will state to the House shortly what are the principles upon which we propose to proceed. In the first place, we propose to make such provision in the Act as will prevent the alienation, and will, on the contrary, preserve and safeguard for national and public purposes, the *corpus* of the property which, when the process of disendowment is complete, will pass from the Church to the nation. In the second place—and this, to my mind, is a more important principle than the other—instead of creating one central general fund applicable to the country as a whole, we propose that, as far as this property is at present attached to localities and parishes, it shall in future be applied and enjoyed locally and parochially. Since 1869, when the Irish Church Act was passed, changes have been made by the Legislature with the consent of both parties in the State in our system of local government which makes this a much easier task to accomplish than it would have been then. We have now, in every area of the country, parish district and county, an organ and representative of local government. We propose to take advantage of the machinery to provide for the local appropriation of the funds, which, if they are thrown into a common reservoir, we are convinced will be squandered and wasted,—funds which may be utilised with the greatest possible benefit as long as they are administered by the localities from which they are drawn. It follows, therefore, that we shall not propose the establishment and aggregation of one central fund of the revenues of the Welsh Church, and as a corollary to that it will not be in our power, and certainly not in our disposition, to propose any capitalisation of the interest of those persons for whom we intend to provide in view of the dispossession which disestablishment and disendowment involve. We propose to constitute, following the precedent of Ireland, a Commission of three, of whom two will be paid. Our purpose is that the chairman shall receive £1,500 a year, and one of the Commissioners £1,000 a year. The third will not be paid at all. [*Laughter.*] We think that we may be able to find some patriotic Welshman to take the office. To these Commissioners we propose to give the same powers as were possessed by the Irish Church Commissioners for enforcing the production of evidence and making and executing of orders, and the framing of rules of procedure. But we do not propose that they shall be a temporary Commission. It is an essential part of our scheme that there should not be an immediate liquidation either of the assets or of the liabilities of the Welsh Church. That being so, there must be a continuing body to superintend and take an active part in the work of administration. The Commissioners will have the necessary borrowing powers for the purpose of carrying on their operations, and will be required, as were the Irish Commissioners, to lay their accounts before Parliament.

MR. COURTNEY: Who will pay them?

MR. ASQUITH: They will be paid out of the funds of the Welsh Church. To these Welsh Commissioners the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will deliver up all books and documents relating to any Welsh property over which they have control. I now come to the question of vesting the property. In the first place, between the passing of the Act and the date of disestablishment, it will be the duty of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to ascertain what property vested in them is derived from Wales, to what extent that property at present bears charges of English episcopal and capitular endowments, and to readjust those charges so that what at present falls on the Welsh property shall in future fall on English property. Welsh property now in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be burdened solely and exclusively with the charges for Welsh purposes. When the adjustment has been made and at the date of disestablishment the property so charged, together with all property belonging to the Church in Wales, will vest immediately in the Welsh Commissioners. It will vest subject to two burdens. In the first place, it will be subject to all interests upon it and to the existing interests of every Incumbent and holder of an ecclesiastical office in Wales. We do not propose that the Commissioners shall retain in their hands the bulk of this property, but that they shall transfer the greater part of it to the various authorities in Wales. In the case of the churches, we propose that all of them, except the cathedrals, shall, on the application of the representative body of the Church, be vested by the Commissioners in that body, subject to all public and private rights which now exist, and to the effective use and enjoyment attached thereto. In that respect we are following strictly the Irish precedent. The cathedrals cannot be regarded as being in the same position as the churches, and we believe that they ought to be treated as national monuments. Having been vested in the Commissioners, they will be retained by them with the obligation to maintain them and keep them in repair, an obligation which might be onerous if thrown upon the representative body. But on the request of the representative body it will be the duty of the Commissioners to permit the cathedrals to continue to be used for the purpose of Divine service. [*Opposition laughter.*] I do not see why that should excite laughter, but my impression is that some hon. Members representing Wales believe that we have gone to extreme limits in going as far as we have done in this matter. With reference to a small head of property which it is not right to omit —namely, the movable chattels, such as plate and furniture used in connection with Divine worship—we propose that they shall be vested in the representative body. I now come to another and more difficult matter—the question of parsonage houses. In Ireland the parsonage or glebe houses were offered to the representative body for what turned out in practice to be a nominal sum. They were allowed to retain them for a certain number of years' purchase of the value of the site, without counting the value of the buildings. As the glebe houses were offered on these terms ; and as the Incumbents were allowed to treat the full value of the houses as part of the sum in respect of which they were entitled to compensation, the State made a bad bargain. The Irish Commissioners thought that it would have been much better if the houses had been handed over free of charge to the representative body. In the case of Wales and of England the Ecclesiastical Commissioners say that certainly two-thirds of the cost of the parsonage houses may be regarded as having been drawn from private benefactions and from payments made by the clergy out of their own incomes. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have made and do make very considerable grants for this purpose in Wales, and we think that on the whole it will be right, as regards the interests of the Church, and no injustice to the interests of the community, to hand over these parsonage houses to the representative body of the Church. In making that statement I must again distinguish between the ordinary parsonage houses occupied by Incumbents and the episcopal and capitular residences. As regards these, we propose that they should be retained by the Welsh Commissioners, who should continue to permit their use as ecclesiastical residences subject to the obligation on the representative body to maintain and keep them in repair. Before I finish what I have to say as to what is to be left to the representative body, I must just mention the subject of private benefactions. They amount in Wales to a comparatively small sum—I think not much more than £13,000 a year. But private benefactions are defined in this, as in the Irish Act, as—

> "Property which has been given by any private person out of his own resources or consists of or is produced by money raised by private subscription, and does not come within the description of Church or ecclesiastical residence, for which provision is otherwise made by this Act."

A very serious and difficult question in connection with private benefactions is to determine the date from which property so left shall be so considered. In introducing the Irish Church Act of 1869 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian suggested that the date should be that of 1660. We have considered the various dates that should be taken in reference to Wales, and think that the date should be a later one. We have, on the whole, come to the conclusion that we ought to take as our date 1703, when Queen Anne's Bounty was established, because it was only from that year that it became possible, through the machinery of Queen Anne's Bounty, for private persons, without offending against the laws, to invest in property of that description for ecclesiastical purposes. I know it is very possible that we may be met with the suggestion that we are going back too far, and that we ought to take a more recent date ; but the more you investigate this question the more you will find that it is a question not worth disputing. The number of private benefactions given in the course of the 18th century to Wales were very small. The number which exists in Wales at the present moment is very small. The total annual value is not more than £13,000, and I think in a matter of this kind, where there is any doubt, we ought to let the balance incline in the direction of generosity ; and I am myself clearly of opinion that the whole of these private benefactions since 1703 may properly and legitimately be made over to the representative body. I now come to some other heads of property with regard to which that cannot be said. First, I take the burial-grounds. We propose that the burial-grounds shall be vested, subject to all public and private rights of burial, in rural parishes, in the Parish Council, or where the parish, from the number of its population, has no Parish Council, in the chairman and overseers of the parish; and in other cases—that is to say, urban districts—in the case of county boroughs in the Council of the borough, and in the case of county districts in the District Council of the district. I do not think that that is a proposal, in the present state of the Burial Law, and the rights which Parliament has conferred on Nonconformists, and their rights of sepulchre in the parish churchyards of the country with their own Religious Service, to which any reasonable exception can be taken. I now come to the glebe, and there, subject to the interests of the existing incumbents, we propose that the glebe shall be vested, in the rural parishes, in the Parish Council or the chairman and overseers, or, in urban districts, in the Council of the borough or District Council. Lastly, I have to deal with tithe rent-charge. We propose that tithe rent-charge, which is, after all, the most valuable asset of the Church in Wales, shall be vested in the County Council of the county within which the lands out of which it arises are situated. We think the cost and trouble of collection will be too great to make it practicable to vest the tithe rent-charge in the Parish Council, and it would be the duty of the County Council to collect it. Thus the interests of the different parishes will be duly safeguarded. All the other classes of property will remain in the Commissioners, who will have full powers of management. Neither they nor any of the Local Authorities will be able to sell, alienate, or exchange the property without the consent of the Local Government Board. Now I come to the question of the manner in which we propose to treat existing interests—that is to say, of Bishops, clergy, and laymen who have valuable interests in the endowments of the Church in Wales. Before I proceed to detail, I will found myself upon a definition which is, I believe, the best which has ever been given of a vested interest in an ecclesiastical property, and which is to be found in a speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, delivered in this House on March 1, 1869, in moving for leave to disestablish the Irish Church.

> "The vested interest of the incumbent,"

said my right hon. Friend—and he uses the term "incumbent" to describe not merely the parish clergy, but the Bishop or holder of the ecclesiastical office or benefice—

> "is quite distinct from his expectation of promotion . . . It is a title to receive a certain net income from the property of the Church . . . The vested interest with which we have to deal is the right of the incumbent to be secured in the receipt of a certain annual income from the property of the Church in consideration of the discharge of certain duties to which he is bound, as the equivalent he gives for that income, and subject to the laws by which he is bound of the Religious Body to which he belongs."

It is in that sense, and in that sense only, that we propose in this Bill to recognise existing vested interests in the Church in Wales. Wherever a person, be he clergyman or be he layman, at present enjoys a freehold office in the Church in consideration of the performance of service or of duty to the Church, he ought, in our opinion, to receive under this measure depriving him of his office, changing his status, and disestablishing the Church, to be placed in the same position pecuniarily as he was before Parliament made that change in his status and the status of the Church. In our judgment, you cannot justly give less than that to the person who is at present in the exercise and enjoyment of the particular office from which we propose, in the interest of the community at large, to displace him. But, on the other hand, although he is enjoying a freehold office, and is entitled to the emoluments which belong to it, he holds and enjoys that office conditionally on the performance of the duties that are attached to it, and he is not entitled to go on receiving what he has hitherto received, except in so far or so long as he continues to perform the duties for which the stipend and pecuniary emoluments are given. That, I think, is a fair and just principle. We therefore propose that, so long as the holder of any existing benefice or office performs the duties of the office which he held at the date of disestablishment, or is only prevented from so doing by some cause other than his own wilful default, he shall be entitled to receive the same emoluments—neither more nor less—as he would have been if the Church had not been disendowed. The practical effect of that will be, as regards the parsonage and glebe, that the incumbent will remain in possession so long as he lives and performs the duties of the cure, and he will continue to receive the rents and profits as regards the tithe rent-charge, which is, after all, the largest ingredient in the income of the Welsh clergy. He will no longer collect the tithe rent-charge, but will receive from the Welsh Commissioners the net proceeds of that charge as far as is appropriate to his particular parish, after deduction of the costs of collection. I said a few moments ago that the tithe rent-charge is to be vested in the County Council. We think it very undesirable to bring the County Council and the existing incumbents into the direct relation of paymasters and recipients. Accordingly, so long as these existing interests continue, it will be the duty of the County Council, when it has collected the tithe and deducted from the sum received the necessary expenses of collection, to pay over to the Commissioners so much of their tithe as is needed to meet the interests which have not expired and to secure the performance of the duties. The amount required by the Commissioners will be a debt from the County Council to the Commissioners, and will be charged upon the County Fund. We do not think there will be any reluctance on the part of the County Council to perform this duty. What they will be doing will be keeping alive and collecting a fund in the whole of which they have a direct reversionary interest, and parts of which will be falling into their possession year after year. It will be said, I have no doubt, that this is a slow process, and that it will postpone for an indefinite period the ultimate enjoyment by the Welsh people of the property of the Church. I agree that that is so, and so far as that is a drawback it is a drawback we must acknowledge and put up with. For what is the alternative? The alternative is to adopt the Irish plan and to go in for a system of commutation. You cannot compel a man to commute; and, in order to induce him to do so, you will have to do what the Legislature had to do in the case of Ireland, and that is, offer him—I will not call it a bribe—but better terms in the shape of some bonus or additional pecuniary inducement than *ex hypothesi* a compensated person is entitled to by law. What was the cost in the case of the Irish Church? The figures are very instructive. In the case of the Irish Church the original estimate of the cost of buying out existing interests was, as presented to this House by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian after the most careful computation, £5,700,000. But what was the actual cost? It was, including an added bonus of 12 per cent., £7,550,000. In other words, the estimate was exceeded by a sum of nearly £2,000,000 sterling. I may point out, further, that commutation necessarily involves a liquid central fund from which the necessary balance to meet the capital charge can be drawn. If you are securing to each parish its share in the endowments of the Church, it would be a task of inextricable confusion and insuperable difficulty to apportion the capital charge so that each particular parish shall bear its own share both of principal and interest. Although I admit the drawbacks of the plan we propose, I consider the arguments against the alternative plan of commutation to be far stronger. At the same time, we feel that a system absolutely stereotyping existing interests might bear hardly both on the Church and on the Welsh people. It would bear hardly upon the Church, because a man would be tied to the living where he happened to be at the time disestablishment took place. He could not leave that living. He could not be promoted, however deserving he might be and however much his services might be required elsewhere, without losing the emoluments for his life and without the church coming under the obligation of providing the endowment for the living which he leaves. On the other hand, it might bear hardly on the Welsh people in parishes where there was a mere handful of people, and where there was no real use in keeping up Church services, having regard to the spiritual requirements of the population. Those seem to us to be very serious evils, and we therefore propose, by way of meeting them, an alternative under which the incumbent who comes under the operation of this Act may exchange his existing interest, so long as he continues to discharge the duties of the benefice, for a compensation annuity on a lower scale, and in the Schedule we have provided such scale. If the incumbent is 50 years or upwards, he is to receive three-fourths of the net emoluments of his benefice; if he is less than 50, a reduction of 1-50th will be made for every year wanting to make up his age to 50 years. To take a typical case, if the income of a benefice is £666 6s. 8d., the incumbent who is 50 years old would receive an annuity of £500; if he is 40, he would receive £400; if 30, £300; and so on in proportion. We think it desirable, if that alternative is taken advantage of, that the consent of the Church Body should be necessary. Otherwise we might have an incumbent taking his stipend on the lower scale and walking off to some other benefice. I must now say one word with reference to curates. Curates do not fall within the definition of a vested interest which I quoted. They are not holders of freehold offices. They hold at the will of the person who employs them. In the case of Ireland curates were compensated, but we have not followed that precedent. In Ireland the curates were divided into two classes —permanent and non-permanent. The permanent curate, if I may say so without offence, was permanent in an Irish sense, and was treated as permanent if he had been in enjoyment of his cure for five years or less. He was to have an annuity equal to his income, which continued so long as he discharged spiritual duties in Ireland; but the non-permanent curate was to receive a gratuity according to a scale prescribed by the Act. My right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian, in introducing the Irish Church Bill, said he did not propose in compensating curates to invade the public or national fund. The subsequent history of the matter is very curious. Curates were to be compensated if they were curates in 1871; that was two years after the passing of the Act, and in the course of that period there was an extraordinary and unprecedented multiplication in the number of curates. Never, in fact, has a country been so prolific in the production of curates as Ireland was at that time, for between 1869 and 1871 the number of curates increased from 563 to 921. There were others who were not treated as permanent, but these 921 all obtained compensation under the Act, on the footing that they were entitled, so long as they discharged spiritual duties in Ireland, to continue to receive an annuity equal to the income they received at the date of disestablishment; and yet of the whole 921 there were only 153 whose annuities were deducted from the annuities paid to the incumbent, so that a curate was able in Ireland to get a life annuity for himself, and yet he was not permanent enough for that annuity to be charged upon the life interest of the incumbent. *Ex hypothesi*, he had been permanently serving prior to the Act. The result of the measure was that by the 12 per cent. bonus given a sum of no less than £1,730,000 was paid to the curates in Ireland to buy them out. When the House considers that not one of them possessed a freehold, and came within the definition of a vested interest, which I have read, I think, in this respect, the precedent of the Irish Church is one which we should do well not to follow. I believe the arrangement under which the curates were made permanent for one purpose and not for another was not due to the framers of the Bill, but was one of those amendments on the scope of the Act to which we are constantly indebted to the more mature and dispassionate wisdom of a revising authority elsewhere. We do not think the curates have any claim to be treated as having a separate claim for compensation. If the curate's salary is paid out of the incumbent's income, so long as the incumbent gets, as he will under this Bill, secured to him for life his present income, if he is minded to continue the services of the curate, he will be able to pay him exactly what he does now, and the curate's position will not be injuriously affected at all. If, on the other hand, the curate is paid from other sources, as a number are paid in Wales, partly out of grants contributed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Commissioners will be empowered, so far as existing interests are concerned, and no further, to continue to make those grants; and I do not know any reason why they should discontinue them, or why the liberality of Churchmen, which makes up the difference, should run dry in consequence of the passing of this Bill. There is one other class of persons and one other only with which I have to deal before I pass from the question of vested interests, and that is the lay patrons of the Church. In this Bill, as in the Irish Act of 1869, no public patron will be entitled to receive compensation for the loss of his patronage. We have endeavoured to ascertain what are the facts and figures in relation to patronage in Wales, and upon a rough calculation we arrive at the following result:—Out of about 970 benefices 626 are in the hands of what may be called public patrons—that is to say, either Bishops, chapters, and incumbents, the Crown and the Lord Chancellor, or the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. The residue, 344, or a little more than one-third of the whole, are in private patronage. Here, again, the experience of the Irish Act is very useful. Under section 18 of the Irish Act private patrons were to be compensated for loss of their advowsons, and if they were not satisfied with the sum awarded to them by the Commissioners they were entitled to refer the matter to arbitration. We learn from the Commissioners that the sale of advowsons was a very rare thing in Ireland—was, indeed, so rare that in several cases no evidence showing the market value could be obtained. If the amount offered by the Commissioners was not agreed to the case was referred to arbitration, and as, in some cases selected as typical, the arbitrator largely augmented the sum fixed by the Commissioners, the Commission felt bound to adopt that scale in dealing with the remainder, and consequently they were obliged to allow a much higher compensation than had been contemplated. And even where they allowed compensation on the principle of the typical cases, yet the amount was still increased on reference to arbitration of 301 cases in which a total sum of £778,000 was awarded for advowsons which were hardly marketable and in respect to which no evidence of market value could be obtained. Three hundred owners of advowsons succeeded in securing no less than £750,000 sterling No wonder that the Commissioners observe in their Report of 1880 that—

> "The experience of the working of the arbitration clause with respect to advowsons is calculated to raise a doubt whether such a tribunal is an eligible one where the claimant is an individual, and where the defendants represent the public funds."

I think that since the passing of the Act of 1869 opinion has changed—I will not say advanced—but it has been largely modified on this subject, and I believe it has changed quite as much, if not more, within the Church itself as in the opinion of persons outside. We have, moreover, but few valuable advowsons in Wales. I am told that sales are exceedingly rare, and that those that have been actually effected have been at prices upon a low and meagre scale. Since the Act of 1869 we have a precedent which we propose to follow partly, because the precedent was set by a Conservative Government and passed by a Parliament in which there was a large Conservative majority—I refer to the abolition of the rights of patronage in the Scotch Church in 1874. We propose to follow exactly the precedent of that Act. I do not think it would be right or consistent with precedent to take away this class of property, however insignificant in value, without giving the owners a right to compensation. We propose that, as in the case of the Scotch Church, any patrons may claim compensation, but I doubt very much whether a large number will claim compensation. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, in Scotland, hardly any one did. There were only one or two cases in which claims were made under the Act. [An hon. MEMBER: There was no confiscation in Scotland.] An hon. Member says that in that case there was no confiscation; but there was confiscation exactly in the same sense, and neither more nor less than in this Bill. The Legislature for public purposes took away rights of property previously guaranteed by law. What we propose is to follow the procedure of the Scotch Act and to require any patron who chooses to make a claim to send in his application within six months of the passing of the Act. We propose further to provide, as it was provided in the Scotch Act, that the compensation shall not in any case exceed, although it may be less, one year's emoluments of the benefice on the average of its emoluments in the three years prior to the passing of the Act. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite are much shocked; but we are following the precedent of their own Government. We propose that this sum, whatever it may be, whether it amounts to or falls short of one year's emoluments, shall not be paid until the occurrence of a vacancy, and then, on the falling-in of the vested interest, that the patron shall be allowed 3 per cent. interest during the time he is kept out of his money. As to the other lay officers of the Church, they are few in number, and I need only say that provisions are made to compensate them for any loss they may sustain. I now come to the ultimate application, subject to the claims of existing interests, of the fund which will be placed at the disposal of the Welsh people. I have already said that the property with which we have to deal may be divided into two classes. First, what I called parochial property, which is now annexed to particular benefices; and, secondly, central property now held by episcopal and capitular bodies, and vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. As to both properties alike we have enumerated in the Schedule of the Bill the purposes to which they may be applied by the authorities whom I shall afterwards describe. The Schedule says that the purposes to which the property may be applied are as follows:—The erection or support of cottage or other hospitals, or dispensaries, or convalescent homes, the provision of trained nurses for the sick poor, the foundation and maintenance of public, parish, or district halls, institutes, and libraries, the provision of labourers' dwellings and allotments, the support of technical and higher education, including the establishment and maintenance of a National Library, Museum, or Academy of Art, and any other public purpose of local and general utility for which provision has not been made by Statute out of public rates. These being the ultimate purposes to which the fund is destined, the machinery of its application will vary according as it belongs to one or other of the categories I have described. In the case of the parochial funds the property will be applied under schemes to be made by the County Councils for the various counties and to be approved by the Commissioners. It will be an Instruction contained in the Act, which will have to be followed in the framing and carrying out of these schemes, that the interests of the particular parish out of which the parochial fund arises shall be mainly and primarily considered. With reference to the central fund, derived from episcopal and capitular revenues, the administration will remain in the hands of the Commissioners themselves. It will be a small fund compared with the other, but yet I think it may be usefully applied to purposes of a general character connected with the interests of the Principality as a whole. That fund is to be charged in the first instance with the expenses of administering the Act; and the surplus is to be applied, under schemes to be framed by the Commissioners themselves, subject to appeal to the Queen in Council, with a provision that not less than two-thirds is to be devoted to technical and higher education, including in particular the establishment and maintenance of a National Library, Museum, and Academy of Art. The Commissioners are to have power to vest property in, or to appropriate it to the use of, the newly-constituted University of Wales or any joint committee of the County Councils.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): May they borrow on security?

Mr. ASQUITH: The Commissioners may borrow; not the County Councils. There are no borrowing powers given to anyone but the Commissioners.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The schemes to be framed by the County Council may contemplate borrowing?

*Mr. ASQUITH: No; that is not the intention. The schemes to be framed by the County Councils will be schemes appropriating the income from property which will be vested in them or in the parishes. The borrowing powers will be confined to the Commissioners. We hope in this way to safeguard, as a possession for ever and not as a mere dwindling fund to be drawn upon to meet the transient exigencies of the hour, this national property, so that it may be applied to purposes of local and general interest for which at present no provision or no adequate provision is made by the law of the land. We have sought, as far as we could, to conciliate and harmonise all these local and general interests. We recognise to the full that as to the bulk of the property the locality has the first claim, and that the fund should be applied to the benefit of the locality. We do not think we are either flying in the face of Welsh sentiment or doing injustice to the claims of localities if we reserve this central fund, at present devoted to no local purposes, for application to purposes in which Wales as a whole is interested, and of which no local community can be expected to bear the burden. The localities have the first claim; but they are only tributaries to the great general stream of Welsh national life. I apologise to the House for the great length at which I have addressed it. There are, of course, in the Bill a number of minor provisions with which I have not attempted to deal, as they would encumber the already too cumbersome exposition of the Bill which I have given to the House. I will venture to appeal to the House to reserve detailed criticism until they see the Bill itself in print. In 1869, on the introduction of the Irish Church Bill—a Bill of greater complexity than this—Mr. Disraeli, who was then the Leader of the Conservative Party, stated, I suppose with the general concurrence of his Party, that in his opinion, provided ample time were given between the First Reading and the Second Reading for the full consideration of the provisions, it would be wiser and better not to enter, on the necessarily imperfect exposition of a Minister, upon a criticism of the plan of the Government; and I find from *Hansard* that so literally and faithfully was that advice followed that the House positively had the advantage of rising that evening at half-past 8 o'clock. I do not feel justified in anticipating any such good fortune on the present occasion. But, without in any way deprecating natural and legitimate criticism, I do feel that minute criticism may very well be postponed until the Bill is in the hands of Members. We present this Bill to Parliament in the firm belief that if it be carried it will not hinder, but it will rather help, the work of the Church in Wales. ["Oh, oh!"] I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite will not give us the credit for that belief. They cannot conceive that in a matter of this kind we can be actuated by higher motives than the most miserable and transient considerations of petty Party expediency. We believe that in submitting this Bill to Parliament we are taking the best step that statesmanship can devise to put an end to a state of things which, so long as it lasts, will be a constant source of embitterment and animosity amongst the various sections of the community which constitute the Principality, and which, as a source of embitterment and animosity, must largely hamper the efforts which they are all making to improve and advance the religious and spiritual condition of the people. We rest our position upon the broad principles of justice. We cannot believe it to be to the interest of the Church—we know it is not to the interest of the State—to maintain in the country in a position of privilege and ascendency a Church which represents the religious opinions of a small minority, and which enjoys exclusively property which, in our view, is national property, to be appropriated to national purposes, by no other title than an historical title the origin of which will not bear careful examination, and which certainly has not been strengthened in its hold upon the convictions and confidence of the Welsh people by the events which have since occurred. We think that in this Bill we do no injustice to the Church. We preserve jealously, aye, and I will even say generously, every interest which is entitled to recognition or consideration at the hands of Parliament. Subject to that, we set free for purposes of great and lasting public benefit a property to which the Welsh people, and the Welsh people alone, have, in our opinion, a legitimate title.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the temporalities thereof."—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Mr. Speaker, whatever our opinions may be as to the policy Her Majesty's Government have adopted, or as to the views which the right hon. Gentleman has expressed, I think we shall all agree that we are deeply indebted to him for the able and lucid manner in which he has explained this Bill. But in the whole course of my Parliamentary experience I never remember a measure of such importance presented to the House of Commons supported by so little argument. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the introduction of the Irish Church Bill in 1869, and to the brief period occupied by the Debate on the First Reading. Has he forgotten that the whole question of principle had been threshed out in Debates occupying days and weeks in this House before the introduction of the Bill? Has he forgotten that the subject had been brought before the country at a General Election, at which the electors had pronounced in favour of that policy, and that therefore all that remained for the Minister to do was to explain to the House of Commons the mode in which he proposed to give effect to it? In the matter which they have taken up to-night I think Her Majesty's Government have attempted to deal with as grave and difficult a question as could be considered by Parliament. It is nothing less than an alteration in those relations between Church and State which have existed in this country longer than the House of Commons itself, and which are more deeply intertwined with every root of the history of our social and national life than, perhaps, any part of our political system. I congratulate, at any rate, Her Majesty's Government that in approaching this question they have approached it in a different manner to that of last year. The unfortunate fate of the right hon. Gentleman last year was this—that he had to produce a miserable Suspensory Bill, which, if it had become law, would have been on the point of expiring at the present moment. It would have done absolutely no good to the advocates of disestablishment and disendowment, while, on the other hand, it would have conferred no slight injury and annoyance on the members of the Church—a Bill which fell still-born at the moment of its introduction, and which everybody knew would not proceed any further, because it was obviously only a sop to induce the Welsh Radicals to support the Government in their Home Rule policy. It had that effect, and it wasted a night of our Parliamentary time, and that is, I think, a sufficient epitaph for the Bill. The Bill the right hon. Gentleman proposes to lay before the House to-night is a very different measure. What is the reason for the changed course the Government have adopted in regard to this great question? Some men attribute it to the pressure of their Welsh supporters. We hear very often a good deal of talk from the Welsh supporters of the Government as to what they will do in certain contingencies. That talk has never yet proceeded to deeds, and I believe it never will. I do not think Her Majesty's Government have been influenced in their changed attitude to this question by any fear of a Welsh revolt; but I do think they have been influenced by a certain change that has occurred in the composition of the Government. We all know how long and steadfastly the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian resisted this policy of disestablishment and disendowment in Wales as against a Church of which he was certainly an attached member. We know that he would have been a most reluctant supporter and a still more reluctant promoter of such a Bill as has been laid before the House to-night. He has gone from the position which he occupied, and we have in his place a Prime Minister who "cares for none of these things," who is ready to support one Established Church in any part of the United Kingdom, or several Established Churches, or none at all, but who has a holy horror of an Established Church whose members vote against his political opinions. Then, in the Leader of this House we have a very able man, who, I remember, a good many years ago said that, in his opinion, he was a purblind politician who could not see that in the event of disestablishment the residuary legatee would be the Church of Rome. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman liked that prospect then; I wonder how he likes it now? He has been sitting for some time past on the fence, and has now comfortably come down upon the disestablishment side. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is a politician of a different calibre. I believe in introducing this Bill he is expressing his own opinion and that of the great majority of the Cabinet; that it is introduced because they believe in a policy of disestablishment and disendowment on account of its own merits. The right hon. Gentleman assents to that proposition. I am glad to hear it, for the fact removes this subject from that wretched position in which it has hitherto been placed by gentlemen on that Bench — namely, that they supported disestablishment and disendowment, not with reference to the merits of the question, but merely because a majority of the electors of one part of the United Kingdom require it. We know now the case we have to deal with, and the country will know, too, what is the policy of the Government. But, Sir, if this measure is promoted, as it is now, on its merits, we are entitled, and the country is entitled, to call upon the right hon. Gentleman for some exposition of the arguments by which it is to be justified. It is surely no light matter to alter the connection between Church and State in this country which has existed for so many ages, and which, if abolished, will, I believe, be a serious loss to the great bulk of the people of this country, and will benefit none, not even those who, in my opinion, are moved by envy and jealousy to agitate for it now. It is surely no light thing that you should say to the Church that she has no title whatever to the endowments which she never received from the State, but which were given to her by pious donors in generations past; that you should state, as if it were a matter that did not admit of argument, that the State has a right to take away that which the State never bestowed; and that revenues, which you admit are dealt with in a way which does very much good, should be taken away from the body that possesses them, when you are absolutely unable to show how they can be devoted to any better purpose. The right hon. Gentleman last year spoke of those who opposed this policy on its merits as belated controversialists. I will venture to say for myself, and I think I may for many others, that, in our opinion, disendowment spells the same thing as plunder and sacrilege; and I know no other meaning that can be attached to those two last words than such a proposition as that laid before the House by Her Majesty's Government tonight. The right hon. Gentleman seems to consider that because the Liberal Party is pledged to this policy, and because, forsooth, nearly the whole of the Representatives in this House from Wales desire it, that therefore this is sufficient justification for its introduction. I think we may fairly answer that by saying that the Conservative Party is pledged against it, and that, in our opinion, which I think would be accepted by any fair-minded man who has heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, this is not a matter which relates to Wales alone. It is a matter which vitally affects the Church of England, and upon which the votes of the great majority of English Members are opposed to the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has quoted the Irish precedent, but that is only begging the question, unless you can show, what I think cannot be shown, that the cases are identical, or what I think the right hon. Gentleman himself seems to doubt, that the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church has been, on the whole, an unmixed benefit to Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman condescended to certain statements which I cannot call arguments, because some of them were, I think, at variance with historical facts and others of them answered each other. He referred to the Church in Wales as something like an alien Church. It has been conclusively proved in this House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian that the Church in Wales is as much the Welsh Church as the Church in England is the English Church. The right hon. Gentleman opposite spoke of it as a symbol of national discord. Why is it a symbol of national discord? Is it because the Church in past generations in Wales did not do its duty to the people among whom it was placed? ["Hear, hear!"] The sentiment is cheered. Does not even the hon. Member who cheers it know that if there was a deadness in the Church of Wales, as undoubtedly there was 100 years ago, that was the fault, not of the Church or of its ministers, but of the Governments of this country in London, who prevented the Church by their action from doing the work which it might otherwise have done? That fact, again, has been conclusively proved by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. Does the right hon. Gentleman contend that it is solely a Welsh Church? The right hon. Member for Midlothian has again conclusively proved that the Church has been one in England and Wales for many centuries of its history, and it is our intention on this side of the House by all the exertions in our power to keep her so. Does the right hon. Gentleman consider that the Church is to blame for the zeal and assiduity which she now devotes to her work?

He did not say anything of the kind, but that is the real root of the attack now made upon her. He charged her with including but a small minority of the population. Well, Sir, she is making every exertion to include a majority within her fold. If she does so, what is said of her? If she points to enormously increased numbers in her schools, in the number of persons confirmed, and in her communicants, she is told that she is proselytising and kidnapping. She is told that she, the Church of the rich, is making an aggression on the Church of the poor. She is blamed because she did nothing in the past and because she does too much now, and the reward that the right hon. Gentleman proposes to her ministers for the zeal and activity which he admits, is that they shall be deprived of payment for the work which they do. Now, there is one stock argument, and as far as I know one argument only, which I need notice at any greater length in connection with this matter. It is this, that because nearly all the Members of Parliament from Wales are in favour of this policy, therefore it should be adopted by Parliament. In the first place, I would venture to suggest that the proportion between the number of Representatives from Wales who are in favour of this policy and those who are against it is very different from the proportion between the number of electors who voted in favour of it and the number who voted against it.

An hon. Member: No!

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Oh! but it is so. There were one-third, and more than one-third, of the electors of Wales at the last General Election who voted for candidates who would have been opposed to the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

Major JONES (Carmarthen, &c.): I may say that many of the Unionist candidates were in favour of disestablishment.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: The hon. Member, if he objects to my statements or can prove that they are incorrect, will have an opportunity of replying. But I go on to say that even if he were right as to the proportion of those Welsh electors who voted for this policy as compared with those who voted against it, I think we have seen some recent symptoms in a certain Welsh county, which I do not think hon. Members from Wales will deny, that these proportions may be considerably altered when another General Election comes upon us. But, taking the matter as it stands, supposing, if you like, that less than one-third of the Welsh electors are against the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church, is that any reason why the Church is to be disestablished and disendowed in Wales—the Church which is not only of Wales, but also of England? Now, there is nothing which Parliament has ever done for Wales which justifies such an argument as that. I know there have been matters, such as intermediate education, turnpikes, and Sunday closing, in which Parliament has legislated separately for Wales, but each and all of those subjects are matters which really might be left to be legislated for by the County Council of any county in the Kingdom. They are purely local matters; they have no importance whatever beyond the immediate locality concerned. That is not the case with the policy which Her Majesty's Government have proposed tonight. That is a policy dealing with the whole interests of England and Wales. They cannot deny it. It is so; and the only argument on which the claim can be justified that the majority of the Welsh electors or of the Welsh Members shall decide the policy of Parliament on the subject of the Church in Wales is that Wales is entitled to be dealt with and considered as a separate nationality. Now, I am sure that Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to admit that Wales can be considered and dealt with as a separate nationality. They have given no sign whatever that any of them are prepared to make any proposals upon that subject to the extent to which they went last Session with regard to Ireland, but even if they did, they declined to allow the Irish Legislature to deal with questions of the establishment and endowment of a Church, and how can they claim for Wales, on which they do not propose to confer Home Rule, greater powers to decide questions of the establishment and endowment of a Church than they proposed in the case of Ireland? I hope I shall not give offence to hon. Members from Wales, who, I know, are very sensitive upon the subject, but I would venture to deny that, historically, Wales has any claim to be considered as a separate nationality at all. Why, as we have heard to-night from the right hon. Gentleman, Wales has not even any recognised national boundary. Nobody can tell where the boundary of Wales ends and where the boundary of England begins. The right hon. Gentleman is obliged by his Bill to include Monmouthshire in Wales, although civilly Monmouthshire is outside it. When the right hon. Gentleman talked of Monmouthshire as predominatingly Welsh, it occurred to me that if he had consulted the figures of the last Census I think he would have found something like this result—that whereas about 217,000 persons in Monmouthshire speak English only, only one-sixth of that number speak Welsh or are bi-lingual, and I think only something like 8,000 speak Welsh only.

*Mr. ASQUITH : I did not say Welsh-speaking. What I said was of predominatingly Welsh habits and sympathies.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH : But if a person cannot speak Welsh, is he or is he not a Welshman ? All I wish to argue is this—that, so far as boundaries are concerned, there is no dividing national boundary for Wales. But Wales has not the essentials, and never had the essentials, of a separate national existence. Wales has never had a capital common to both North and South Wales. Even now, if Welshmen desire to meet in conference from North and South Wales, they have to meet at Shrewsbury. Wales has never had a separate government—a single government for the whole country, or a single Legislature for the whole country. She never has had a separate national existence, and therefore I contend that to claim that this question shall be decided with reference to the Church on the ground of separate Welsh nationality is to set up a claim which the policy and actions of Her Majesty's Government have absolutely negatived, and which nothing in history can support. I really feel myself debarred from going at length into arguments against the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. We are on the defence. It is for those who attack the institution which we defend to produce in the first place their arguments against it. Beyond a few set phrases, which I think the right hon. Gentleman has picked up from some of his Welsh allies, and which I cannot imagine he really believes himself, he gave us no argument whatever on behalf of this measure. I will turn for a few minutes to the consideration—I hope not too detailed consideration, which I agree with the right hon. Gentleman cannot be entered upon with advantage now—of some of the provisions of the Bill. In the first place, with regard to the disestablishment part of the measure. The right hon. Gentleman has based himself on the model of the Irish Act. But I do not think he laid sufficient stress on the complete difference *qua* Establishment between the circumstances with which he has to deal in this case and those with which the Irish Act had to deal. The Irish Church was a separate Church—ecclesiastically a completely separate Church. She was united, it is true, by Act of Parliament with the English Church, but by Act of Parliament only. She was completely separate in every other way, and therefore it was a very much simpler and easier matter for Parliament to deal with the disestablishment of the Irish Church than it is for Parliament to deal with the disestablishment of what is not a Welsh Church at all, but four dioceses in Wales which form part of the Church of England. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman admits that disestablishment in this Bill means the complete abolition, so far as these dioceses are concerned, of all ecclesiastical law, of the provincial courts, of Convocation, of patronage, of Church discipline, of power over Church ritual and ceremonies—of the whole law, in fact, which governs a Church. These dioceses, with respect to that, are to be completely cut off by disestablishment from the rest of the Church of England. What is to be their relation to the Church of England in the future ? Now, that is a very important question, which the right hon. Gentleman, so far as I heard, has not attempted to explain. He practically, as far as I could see, proposes to establish, by Act of Parliament, ecclesiastical anarchy in Wales. No doubt he leaves it open to a Church Body, if a Church Body be constituted, although he does not propose to constitute one by the Bill—he leaves it open to a Church Body to constitute itself, and for its members to subject themselves, if they choose, to any laws they may desire. But I think we are entitled to some fuller explanation than we have yet received from the right hon. Gentleman—though I hope he will not supose I am in any way finding fault with the fullness with which he has explained his Bill—of the manner in which these four dioceses are to govern themselves; by what law they are to be governed; and what is to be their precise relation to their brethren in the English Church? The Church of Ireland is a separate and independent body. Are these four Welsh dioceses to be a separate and independent Church? If that be so, the right hon. Gentleman wantonly, and I will add wickedly, mutilates the Church of England. I am talking not of temporalities but of ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs. What right has he to suggest to Parliament that Parliament should strike off these four dioceses, *qua* their ecclesiastical and spiritual government, from the Church of England, leaving them and their members stripped in the wilderness, competing on what he is pleased to call a footing of equality with those different denominations, well organised and well endowed, whom he takes care to leave alone? The right hon. Gentleman poses as the friend of the Church in Wales. I wish he would go to one of these Welsh denominations who know pretty well the value of endowments and suggest to them that it would be for their spiritual interest that they should hand over their endowments to him to be dealt with by the Parish and County Councils. I wonder what sort of an opinion that denomination would entertain of the friendship of the right hon. Gentleman. Let me now come to the question of disendowment. On that I think I may congratulate the right hon. Gentleman in not having followed the letter or in many cases the spirit of the advice of a certain well-known individual in North Wales—namely, Mr. Gee. Mr. Gee, who, I believe, is a personage not without considerable electoral influence, put out last year a very sweeping, a very audacious, and, in some respects, a very ridiculous proposal for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church. The right hon. Gentleman is good enough to allow the parish churches to be handed over to the Church body, but he will not give over the cathedrals, although, perhaps, there is no part of England where more has been done for the cathedrals by the voluntary contributions of members of the Church than has been done in Wales. Has the right hon. Gentleman ever been at Llandaff or St. David's? Does he know that these buildings which he proposes to hand over to the new Welsh Commissioners he proposes to establish, and who will not, I should imagine, be a body very friendly to the members of the Church, have been almost completely rebuilt in this generation by the offerings of Churchmen? I know he proposes that the cathedrals should be permitted to be used for divine service by the new Church body. Is anybody else to be permitted to use them? Is the right hon. Gentleman quite sure that that demand will not be made? If the cathedrals are to be preserved at the expense of these funds, which he calls national funds, as national monuments, and if that demand is made how is he prepared to meet it? Let me tell him how Mr. Gee would advise him to meet it. Mr. Gee has a very delightful little proposition on this matter. He proposes that the churches shall be transferred to the Parish Councils, that the use of them is to be granted to the new Church body, but that the parishioners shall be empowered to withhold them in case doctrines are taught or ceremonies introduced which they consider inconsistent with the Protestant character of the Church. The parishioners and the Parish Councils, if the proportions given by the right hon. Gentleman are correct, will be mainly, if not entirely, composed of those who do not believe in the teaching of the Church. And this is what is called in Wales religious liberty. That is the proposal actually made by those who support a society that has been founded for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control. Well, Sir, I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman that, although he has been obliged to borrow from Mr. Gee to some extent with regard to the cathedrals, he has not gone so far as his teacher with regard to the parish churches. Then I come to the advowsons. I have no very great opinion of a person who would sell an advowson and put the proceeds into his own pocket. But I will say this. Advowsons have always been recognised in this country as property. The right hon. Gentleman both last year and this year recognised advowsons as property, and to tell a person that you will take his property away and give him in return at some distant date one year's purchase of that property is very like confiscation. But I will go to a more important matter. This Bill differs from the Irish Church Bill in one very important respect. As the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, the Irish Church Act had a great and, as I think, proper and just regard to the position in which the disestablished and disendowed Church would be left by the Act coming into operation. It did its best to provide, so far as could be done with full recognition of the principle of disestablishment and disendowment, that the services of the Church might be carried on, no doubt at great sacrifices on the part of those who were interested, after the process of disestablishment and disendowment had taken place, and therefore it provided for a scheme of commutation of life interests coupled with a bonus of 12 per cent. where three-fourths of the whole clergy in any diocese were willing to commute, which enabled the new Church body in Ireland, by the voluntary sacrifices of her Bishops and clergy, to raise funds for her future maintenance without trespassing upon the principle established by the Act of Parliament. Now, the right hon. Gentleman proposes nothing whatever of this kind by his Bill. That is a blot in the Bill which is a gross inequity as against the Church in Wales. By the right hon. Gentleman's own contention,—for he pointed out that the revenue of the Church after all is only £280,000 a year—the Church in Wales is a poor Church. He knows perfectly well that in the agricultural districts of Wales the Church is a poor Church, and that in the large towns the growing populations made it difficult for her to keep up with the demands upon her, and yet he will not take the precedent ready to his hand, and enable her, by a fair and just proposal, to secure the continuance of her services and provide for her future needs. But what about the curates? Does the right hon. Gentleman really think that his proposal with regard to curates is quite fair? Suppose an unfortunate young man, who has spent considerable money in his education for the Church, is curate to an old rector, and suppose the old rector dies before the day arrives which the right hon. Gentleman fixes as the commencement of this Act, what is the position of the curate? He gets no compensation at all, and although I do not want to dwell on this matter now, yet I must say, while quite admitting that there were abuses in this matter in connection with the administration of the Irish Act, against which the right hon. Gentleman would have done well to guard, yet I do not think he has gone far enough to give, I will not say generous, but just treatment to the curates in Wales who have entered the service of the Church. In the question of glebes, I think the Home Secretary has followed Mr. Gee.

Mr. ASQUITH: I have never seen Mr. Gee's proposals.

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I cannot help thinking that some of the right hon. Gentleman's advisers must have been cunningly insinuating into his mind some of Mr. Gee's ideas. But I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman to take the opportunity of stating whether, in making over, as I admit he does most fairly and justly, to the new Church body the parsonages he also intends to couple with these parsonages the gardens and curtilages, which are necessary, of course, to the enjoyment of the actual residence.

Mr. ASQUITH: That will be so.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I am very glad to hear it. Now I come to the very important question of the way in which these funds, when the right hon. Gentleman has got hold of them, are to be dealt with. He was rather hard, I think, upon the precedent of the Irish Act. He said the funds of the Irish Church had been wasted and squandered. He suggested that there had been, on the part no doubt of the Government on both sides, a continued species of Parliamentary bribery. ["No, no."] Well, "wasting" and "squandering" are very strong words, and those words, at any rate, the right hon. Gentleman used. Does the right hon. Gentleman suppose that the funds which he considers to have been wasted and squandered by Parliament in Ireland are considered to have been wasted and squandered by those who represent Ireland in this House? I am quite sure that there is not one of the matters to which the Church funds in Ireland have been devoted which the Irish Members have not at the time accepted with practical unanimity as a benefit to Ireland. What I have heard with regard to these funds from Irish Members is this—that the existence of this Irish Church Fund has on more than one occasion, perhaps on many occasions, relieved Parliament of the necessity of imposing upon Imperial taxation that which in all fairness to Ireland ought to have been paid for by the Imperial Exchequer. Now, the right hon. Gentleman proposes to hand over the tithe to Parish and County Councils. Does he think they will waste and squander these funds less than Parliament has done in the case of Ireland? Does he think that they will always be incorruptly administered in a spirit free from Party or religious bias and with a sole view to the common good of the whole of the Welsh people? Nay, further, to what purpose are they to be devoted? The right hon. Gentleman gave us a list. He told us they were to be devoted to parish rooms, libraries, labourers' dwellings, and allotments. But every one of these matters has been now provided for by Act of Parliament as expenditure which might properly be imposed by the Local Authorities on the ratepayers. He proposes, in regard to the central fund, that it should be devoted to technical and higher education. That, again, is a matter to which Parliament has made considerable contributions in the past, and is likely to make even greater contributions in the future. What his proposition really amounts to is that the funds of the Church in Wales are to be devoted to relieving the ratepayers on the one side and the taxpayers on the other. So far as relief to the ratepayers is concerned, we have argued continually that those who now pay rates are unfairly burdened by the present system, under which local taxation is really charged on one kind of property only. But the reply to that has always been, especially from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "Why, you are asking relief for the landlords." Does the right hon. Gentleman really suggest that it would not be wasting and squandering the Church funds to use them to relieve the rates from burdens which must eventually come—although, in the first instance, they will be paid by the ratepayers—upon the owners of real property in the country and in the towns? I am quite sure of this—that if he were to put it to the owners of real property in Wales whether they would desire that their Church should be robbed in order that its funds might be devoted to their relief, the right hon. Gentleman would receive a very emphatic reply in the negative. I maintain that this proposal to devote the Church property to what, I suppose, the Government consider to be a more useful and a more valuable purpose than that to which it is at present applied is a mere waste and squandering of funds which ought to be applied to the purposes to which they are at present devoted, which you have no right to take away, and which you admit are used to the great advantage of the country. These funds of the Church, whether looked upon as national property, or, as I look upon them, as property which the Church holds in trust for the performance of its duties, are in either case a portion, and a not very large portion, of the wealth of the country saved from the grasp of individual selfishness and devoted to public ends. The effect of the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman will be, through a system of jobbery and favouritism, to give them back again for the benefit of individuals. I thank the House for having borne with me so long. I will only say, in conclusion, that I can conceive no stronger condemnation of this proposal to mutilate the National Church of our country—a Church that has borne a most glorious part in our history for generations—and to deprive it of the funds necessary for its work in those populous towns and in those widely-spread country districts where no other existing religious organisation can replace it, than the fact that the Government can find nothing better to do with those funds than to devote them to such purposes as those which the right hon. Gentleman proposes.

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) said that, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to this Bill, there was one point on which all would be agreed—namely, that it was not very convenient to discuss at any length the details of a Bill one had not seen. Of course, the subject was a difficult one. It bristled with difficulties; but he had always thought that the business of statesmen was to overcome difficulties, and he had, he confessed, great confidence in the statesmanship of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. One thing was certain, that if the Bill had come down from Heaven it could not have been made satisfactory to the right hon. Baronet. He (Sir G. Osborne Morgan) would not for a moment contend that the Bill did not need amendment, but there would be many opportunities—too many, he feared—for proposing and discussing Amendments. The Bill appeared to him to be a just, a liberal—too liberal some might call it—and a statesmanlike measure. It was free from two great vices which disfigured the Irish Church Act—namely, the compounding clauses and the preposterous mode of compensating curates. Speaking for himself, he believed the proposals for the transfer of property to Local and Parochial Bodies, as well as for the ultimate application of the surplus, were such as would strongly commend themselves to the people of Wales. More than that he could not at present see his way to say; but if he might venture upon a little piece of advice to the friends of the Church in Wales, he would say that they would do wisely to think twice before they rejected the Bill, because it was possible that the Church might go further and fare worse. Having said that, he came to the speech of the right hon. Baronet. He knew the right hon. Baronet was thoroughly in earnest in this matter, and he had listened to his speech—as he always did—with the greatest interest and attention, but he could not help thinking that the right hon. Baronet had been labouring under a great disadvantage. The right hon. Baronet appeared to have got his facts at second-hand, and those who spent their lives in Wales knew how easy it was for gentlemen who did not understand a word of the Welsh language to pay a flying visit to some fashionable watering-place in the Principality, and collect a parcel of facts on the one side and gossip on the other, and out of all this to build up a mass of half-truths which were really more misleading than positive falsehoods. The right hon. Baronet spoke of the activity the Church of Wales had displayed, and it was true that it had shown great activity. It had made great progress, it had collected large sums of money, and spent a great deal in building churches and parsonages. All credit to it for that; but, after all, it was not to be wondered at, for although the Church in Wales did not represent more than a fourth of the population, it certainly possessed three-fourths of its wealth. But he thought that when they came to a future stage of the Bill he should be able to show that what the Church in Wales had given out of its abundance to the support of religion was as nothing to what the Nonconformists had given out of their comparative penury. The right hon. Baronet had forgotten one fact—namely, that the zeal and activity of the Church in Wales had chiefly shown itself in what, for the want of a better phrase, he would call a brick and mortar progress. ["Oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen might cry "Oh!" but he would give them the opinion of a distinguished Churchman on this matter. At a Church Congress in South Wales the late Dean of Bangor had said—

> "The Church has made material progress of late; churches, parsonages, and schools have been built. But how many of the churches are empty?"

Those words were used some years ago, but they were equally true to-day. On every possible occasion when this subject had been debated a good deal had been said about the parish of Brymbo—though why that should be selected, except as a delicate compliment to himself, he did not know. It was not a typical Welsh place at all, and it had a very large English colony residing in it. It was a great industrial centre, and the principal employer of labour was a fanatical Churchman. The Vicar of the parish had collected considerable funds—sufficient to enable him to build one church and to re-build another. No doubt he had collected a good deal of money from his parishioners, but in addition to that he had sent round an appeal to people outside—to nearly every Member of Parliament, for instance—declaring that this parish was the one black spot in Wales. The Vicar stated that there was only one parish church in the place, omitting to mention that there were nine or ten Nonconformist chapels. In this way a considerable sum of money had been collected, and one church had been built and another re-built. But what had been the result? Why, that the parish church which he attended regularly was never more than three-parts full, while every Sunday teeming congregations might be seen flowing out of the Nonconformist chapels. He was here reminded of some lines with which, no doubt, his Scotch friends would be familiar—

> "The wee kirk, the free kirk,
> The kirk without the steeple,
> The auld kirk, the cauld kirk,
> The kirk without the people."

The right hon. Baronet, when he spoke of the progress of the Welsh Church, forgot to state one most important fact. The places in which the Church had made most progress had been exactly those in which, to all intents and purposes, it was an unendowed Church—where, in fact, she had to do what of course she would have to do in every case if the Bill passed—that was to say, rely upon the voluntary efforts of her members. The House might take it that in Wales the progress of the Church was in exact inverse proportion to the assistance which she received from the State. Where she depended upon voluntary effort she was making progress; where, on the contrary, she had to depend upon tithes and endowments, she was going backwards. Was not that the strongest possible argument for the Bill? Besides that, he would say that the progress which the Church had made was absolutely nothing to the progress which had taken place in what he might call the demand for disestablishment. He did not hesitate to say that for one person who 20 years ago was an advocate of disestablishment in Wales there were at least 100 now. When, 24 years ago, Mr. Watkin Williams brought this question before the House, seven Welsh Members voted for disestablishment and 13 against it. Instead of the opponents of disestablishment being two to one, they were now only two to 28, and if they took Monmouthshire, they were three to 31. It was easy to say that if a certain number of voters had voted the other way the proportion would have been much decreased. As a matter of fact, if only 100, or to speak more correctly, only 109—Conservative voters had "voted the other way," there would not have been one single Welsh Representative of the Church Defence Party in the House of Commons. He would appeal to the Liberal Unionists to hear what the Duke of Devonshire had said on this question of disestablishment. Speaking of the Church of Scotland, he said he thought the question whether the Establishment in Scotland should be maintained or not was a question which must be decided by the votes of the Representatives of the people of Scotland. Taking that Hartingtonian test, he thought the case of Wales was much stronger than the case of Scotland or Ireland was—not that he was opposed to the disestablishment of the Church in Scotland; he would vote for its disestablishment to-morrow just as 25 years ago he voted for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. But if they compared the proportion of Members of the two countries, they would find that the proportion of Welsh Members who were in favour of disestablishment was infinitely greater than the proportion of Scotch Members in favour of Scotch disestablishment; greater than the proportion of Irish Members who voted for the disestablishment of the Irish Church; and it was even greater than the proportion of Irish Members who were now in favour of Home Rule. Now, he asked himself what had produced this extraordinary change of opinion? Hon. Members opposite would say it was the result of political agitation.

Sir R. WEBSTER: Hear, hear!

Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN said, he was going to state that such an assertion was nonsense; yet he did not want to say anything offensive to the hon. and learned Member, yet it did seem a superficial way of looking at the matter. Did the hon. and learned Member believe that any amount of agitation, political or otherwise, could turn a majority of two to one into a minority of two to 28? The explanation of the change which had taken place in public opinion in Wales was, that the matter had been discussed over and over again; that the people had been educated, and that three points had clearly come out. Those three points were: That the Church in Wales was the church of the minority; that the Church in Wales was the church of the rich; and that the Church in Wales was the church of the stranger. Those three propositions he was prepared to maintain against all-comers. As to the first point, he really did not think that anybody seriously supposed that the Church in Wales was the church of the majority. He had heard of people who contended that the members of the Church were more numerous than the members of any denomination taken singly; but he never heard of anybody seriously arguing that the number of members of the Church was really more than the numbers of all the different denominations put together. Two authorities, indeed, had attempted to show that there was actually a majority for the Church in Wales, but they arrived at this conclusion in rather peculiar ways. A right rev. Prelate, who seemed to be tormented by a *cacoethes scribendi*, and would probably to-morrow pour out his soul over as many columns of *The Times* newpaper as the editor could afford to give him, had alleged that the Church had a majority in Wales, but he had arrived at the conclusion by a singular method. He had gone to the statistics of three leading Nonconformist Bodies, and having ascertained the number of enrolled or registered members to be 800,000 or 900,000, or 48 per cent. of the population, he jumped to the conclusion that the other 52 per cent. were all Churchmen. The right rev. Prelate might as well have gone to the headquarters of the Blue Ribbon Army, and, having ascertained that a certain number of members were enrolled as wearers of the blue ribbon, have put down every other man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom, including the late Attorney General, who was, he believed, a total abstainer, and the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth, as habitual drunkards. Then the hon. Member for Oswestry arrived at a similar result by a different process. He went to the St. Asaph Workhouse, and ascertained that of the 134 pauper inmates there, 96 were Churchpeople, 13 Calvinist Methodists, 9 Baptists, 6 Independents, 5 Wesleyans, and 5 Roman Catholics—in all, 38. Having discovered that in the workhouse the people were as 96 to 38, or about 3 to 1, he treated it as a microcosm of the whole Principality, and came to the conclusion that the proportion of Churchmen was the same outside. A clergyman—an Englishman who had spent a large part of his life in inspecting schools in Wales, the Rev. Robert Temple—writing a short time ago, said—

> "Now, there cannot, I think, be the least doubt that the Church of England is in Wales greatly outnumbered by the Nonconformists. One of the strongest opponents of disestablishment is reported to have said lately that the difference was three to one, and my long acquaintance with the Principality and my observation of elections of all kinds, and most especially of School Board elections, lead me to the same conclusion. Montgomeryshire, where I inspected schools from October, 1868, to March, 1893, is by no means an extremely Nonconformist country, and its boroughs return a Conservative Member; but even there the Nonconformists have a majority on every existing School Board, and if School Boards were made universal I do not believe there would be a Church majority in five parishes, at the outside, out of 50."

In the face of such facts, and with the testimony of one's senses, how could anything be gained by a religious census? They might as well say that a man could not tell whether he was hot or cold without looking at a thermometer. They objected in 1890 to the religious census because all the "absenters" would be put down as Church members, and they knew that every gaunt Primrose dame would go to every poor dependent over whom she had influence with a census paper in one hand and a notice to quit in the other. ["Oh!"] "He jests at scars who never felt a wound," but they knew how much petty persecution of that kind went on in Wales. But the Church in Wales was not only the Church of the few, but the Church of those who, presumably, were best able to pay for their own worship. They all knew Sydney Smith's dictum about carriage-horses driving to church. In Wales it was said that they could tell whether a man was a Churchman or Nonconformist by the hour at which he dined and the number of servants he kept. Over and over again he had been at a church attended solely by the squire, his family, and his dependants, and he meant by that those people who waited upon providence and hoped to gain something by being members of the Church. When he thought of the prizes which the Church of England offered in bishoprics, deaneries, canonries, and livings, aggregating something like £270,000 a year, and how until lately the whole disposition of local charities was in the hands of the parson, he was literally amazed that so many Nonconformists had remained true to the faith of their fathers. Let them recollect the wise saying of Mr. Lecky—" A richly-endowed Church may make many converts, but it makes more hypocrites." A great deal had been said of the origin of the ancient British Church as compared with the English Church. Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams recently delivered a most erudite and able and interesting lecture, in which he showed that the old British Church had been altogether distinct in its origin, ritual, and constitution from the Anglican introduced from Rome by St. Augustine. That, no doubt, from an academical point of view, was an exceedingly interesting question, but he could not help thinking that what they, as practical legislators, wanted to consider was, not the relation of the Welsh Church or the British Church to the English Church, in the 7th or 13th century, but the relation of the English Church to the Welsh people in the 19th century. Looked at from that point of view, he said deliberately that the Church in Wales was an alien Church. The Church of England, with its stereotyped ritual and hierarchical constitution, was utterly unsuited to the genius of the Welsh people. In one word, it was too cold for an emotional people, too aristocratic and Bishop-ridden for a democratic people. Professor Goldwin Smith had said that the Celtic peasant might be a fervent Catholic, as he was in Brittany and Ireland; a fervent Presbyterian, as he was in the Highlands; a fervent Methodist, as he was in Wales; but a staid and decorous Anglican never. In England, as the Archbishop of Canterbury had said, the mission of the Church had been to guide and quicken national life. Would anybody say that of the Church in Wales? So far from arousing national life, the tendency of the Church in Wales had been to deaden national life. If there had been one thoroughly national movement in Wales, it had been the movement in favour of higher and intermediate education. In almost every county in Wales Schemes had been elaborated to carry out the provisions of the Act for intermediate education. Those Schemes had been most carefully considered and adopted; but what had been the attitude of the Bishops and clergy towards the Schemes? Look at the records in the House of Lords. In five cases Motions had been made, always by a Bishop, to set either the whole or a vital part of the Schemes aside. In three cases, he was sorry to say, those Motions had been successful; in two, thank God! they had failed. He was not going into the merits of these Motions; but this he did say, and he could quote the Prime Minister in his support—that they showed a deliberate attempt to go counter to the express wishes of the people. The result of that had been that in Wales the cause of disestablishment had become the cause of nationality. They all remembered that about a year ago a very remarkable meeting was called to protest against the Suspensory Bill at the Albert Hall. It was attended by 19 Bishops, 34 Peers, and a perfect army of rejected Parliamentary candidates. It was said at the time—and he believed with truth—that so many defeated candidates had never been gathered together under the same roof. But where were the Representatives of Wales? Was there a single Welsh Member present? Was there even a single chairman of a Welsh County Council? No; and, so far as he could gather from the speeches made at that meeting, which were very able and eloquent, not a single man showed that he cared one red cent about the wants or the wishes of the Welsh people. They were as much ignored as if they had been Zulus or Hottentots. That roused indignation down in Wales, even among the rank-and-file of the Welsh clergy. But what could they do? Their promotion depended on the Bishops. In one diocese it was an understood thing that men were promoted to offices of trust and profit, not for preaching the Gospel, but for fighting Dissent. If a clergyman could only show that he had from his pulpit denounced Dissent as the greatest of national sins, or, failing that, if he could show that he had written an insolent letter to a Welsh Member, he was sure of promotion. He (Sir G. Osborne Morgan) had listened to sermons which made him doubt if he lived in a Christian country, but he would not quote from sermons or from speeches. He preferred written or printed testimony, like the late Mr. Mereweather, who used to say that he believed in a future state of punishment, because in this world men were not made accountable for what they said, but only for what they wrote. *The Quarterly Review* was an accredited organ of the Church Party. It was supposed to be written by gentlemen and scholars. He wished he could say that of the article on *The Church in Wales*, from which he was going to quote. If the writer had been referring to the very lowest and most degraded type he could not have spoken in more offensive terms than he did about the leading Welsh Nonconformists. Of these men—men of the purest and most holy lives, whose friendship he (Sir G. Osborne Morgan) valued—the writer said that their daily lives commanded no respect. Then he went on to speak of "a hideous travesty of Christian life," and of the interest which Welsh congregations took in Church matters as the "interference of uneducated vulgarity in spiritual matters." Uneducated vulgarity was bad enough, but what was ten times worse was educated vulgarity, and for genuine vulgarity, for downright snobbishness, he would commend them to the author of this article. The writer also said, what was probably true, that the newspapers of Wales were almost entirely in the hands of Nonconformists. Why was that? Simply because the people who read them were Nonconformists. He believed that out of 17 papers printed in the vernacular, only two were carried on by Churchmen, and they were kept alive partly by large subsidies and partly by abuse of his hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. The writer also declared that the old spirit of law and order was almost entirely disappearing, and "irreligious and lawlessness" had taken their place. Irreligious and lawlessness! By their fruits they would know them. Surely the author of this egregious nonsense knew perfectly well that the people of whom he was speaking were people in whose country the places of worship and Sunday schools were always full, and the gaols were almost always empty, and whose amusements were the purest and the most elevating in the whole world. The proportion of crime to the population in Wales was about half what it was in England, and at the last Assizes it took four or five counties to make two prisoners. A Judge recently complained to him that he had to travel 50 miles in North Wales to try one prisoner, and she was an Englishwoman. It was often said that if the Church were disestablished, religion would be utterly crushed in Wales; and that if she were not maintained by tithes and endowments, she could not be maintained at all. All he could say was that if the Church could only be maintained by such means, the sooner she ceased to be maintained the better. It was an extraordinary thing that those who used that argument did not see what a handle they were putting in the hands not only of the enemies of all forms of religious establishments, but the enemies of all religion whatever. He would quote as his last extract a passage from Herbert Spencer, who asked

> "Is Christianity, after so many centuries, so little rooted in men's hearts that but for the Government watering-pots it would wither away?"

The right hon. Gentleman opposite said that the Welsh dioceses were dioceses of the province of Canterbury, and that if they disestablished the Welsh Church, they were bound to go on and disestablish the English Church. If so, so much the worse for the Established Church of England. But there was nothing more absurd than to say that Wales was not entitled to be treated as a separate nationality, when Parliament had over and over again—Parliament, led even by the Government of which the right hon. Baronet was a Member—had acknowledged their right to be dealt with as a separate nationality. Nothing would be more unjust or absurd than to say that they in Wales who were ripe for disestablishment ought to wait till they in England who were not ripe were ready for it. But he did not think that that argument of the right hon. Gentleman was likely to make much impression on the Liberal Members. They had come, rightly or wrongly, to the conclusion that the question of disestablishment, even in England, was only a question of time. How could it be otherwise? If there was anything certain, it was that the whole tendency of the age was toward perfect freedom of opinion in religion, and it was absurd to speak of religious freedom when one set of religious opinion was hedged round by artificial reverence and exalted and protected at the expense of the rest. Look back on the last 60 years; the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic Emancipation, the admission of Jews to Parliament, Church rate abolition, Burial Law reform, the admission of Nonconformists to the Universities—all those measures were hotly resisted, but they had all been carried ; and what were they but so many stages which marked the progress they were making towards perfect religious freedom, and they could not have perfect religious freedom without perfect religious equality. He would only say, in conclusion, that he had too much confidence in the sense of justice which distinguished Englishmen to believe that, when all these facts were laid before them, they would any longer turn a deaf ear to the all but unanimous demand of the Representatives of a people who, despite their poverty, despite their discouragement, despite the frowns of the wealthy and the sneers of the educated, had managed to make for their own spiritual needs a provision which might put to shame the richest and the proudest Church Establishment in the world.

*Mr. BUCKNILL (Surrey, Epsom) said, that those who had taken the trouble of studying the Debates which for a long series of years had taken place in the House of Commons in regard to Disestablishment must have been much astonished at the two modern or new arguments which had been put forward by the present Government. Those two arguments were first heard in the speech made by the Home Secretary last Session, and they had been repeated to-day. First of all, the Home Secretary said that the proposed disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales was for the good of the Church in Wales, and, secondly, he said that the Irish case was an exact precedent for disendowment. If it were the fact that disestablishment and disendowment would strengthen the Church, was it not passing strange that the great Radical Party, the amenders of abuses and righters of wrongs which they posed as being, had taken so long a time to find out that by disestablishing and disendowing the Church they were playing the part of her best friends ? At the beginning of the century it was said that the abuses of nepotism and absenteeism were in existence in the Church in Wales. Was not that, then, the time for the great Radical Party to come forward and generously offer to hold out its helping-hand to the Church ? But nowadays, when all men knew, and all men who were honest would admit that the Church in Wales was doing its best, was full of vigour and vitality, and was honestly working side by side with its Nonconformist brethren, in peace and with benefit to those who received the administrations of both, how odd it was, how strange that at such a time the Government, for the first time as a Government, should step forward and seek to disestablish and disendow that Church. It strained the imagination to think that those who put forward such an argument could be really serious. But it did not stop there ; they had another excuse, which was that they were impelled to do that which they were seeking to do in obedience to the mandate of national sentiment. National sentiment might be a good dictator ; he could understand a mandate of national sentiment which, for the benefit of our country and fatherland, would be a dictator which they would be bound to obey, but he could also conceive a national sentiment, so-called, that it would be unwise to listen to. Of what stuff was this national sentiment made : was it a national sentiment found in Ireland or Scotland ? Let them take Ireland. He would like to know how many of the ordinary Irish voters ever heard about the Protestant Church in Wales at all in their lives ; how many times they had been addressed from the pulpit or by candidates who asked for their support to help disestablish the Church in Wales ? There was no such national sentiment in Ireland, and he ventured to say, though here he was not on such strong ground, it was very uncertain whether there was any such national sentiment in Scotland. In England the Government knew too well how the matter stood. If there was, therefore, a national sentiment it was amongst the Welsh people only ; and was that, he asked, a sentiment springing from an objection on principle to the religious principle ?

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda) : Hear, hear !

Mr. BUCKNILL said, very well, if it was, all he could say was that he could quote a very strong authority to show that the affirmation given by the hon. Member below the Gangway was not correct. He would take the words of a man who, he believed, knew more about the history of the Church in Wales than any other Member of this House—he meant the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). When he heard Mr. Watkin Williams say in this House in 1870 that the Scriptures declared against the principle of National Establishment, what did the right hon. Gentleman say? He said—

> "If my hon. Friend will permit me to say so without intending him any disrespect, I must say he has, in my opinion, entirely failed to prove that such is the case. Sufficient proof of what I say is to be found in this—that although it is true that Welsh Nonconformity had taken root and become a national sentiment in the country more than half a century ago, he would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to discover the slightest trace of controversy with regard to disestablishment. It has not been a question with regard to national establishment of religion. That has nothing to do with the growth of Welsh dissent."

He preferred that statement of the right hon. Gentleman to the assertion he heard just now from the hon. Member below the Gangway.

MR. W. ABRAHAM: Twenty-four years ago.

MR. BUCKNILL: Yes; and he was obliged for the interruption. If the principle laid down by the right hon. Gentleman was good then, it was good now. The Home Secretary did not pretend that there was any good cause for asserting there were any such abuses in the Church in Wales now as existed in the early part of the century; therefore, if the only cause for objection to the Establishment was by reason of the shortcomings that were said to exist then, how about 1894, when they knew they had disappeared, and that the Church was working with the utmost of its ability to do that which was right and proper? ["No, no!"] The hon. Member might say "No, no!" but he challenged him to get up afterwards and draw attention to a single circumstance that justified his saying the Church was not doing its duty in the Principality of Wales at the present moment. Therefore, he was justified in saying that objection on principle to the establishment of a National Establishment was not a good one, and they must look further for a valid objection to support those who were desirous of disestablishing and disendowing. He wondered if it had anything to do with money? What did Mr. Watkin Williams, who was one of their best and foremost of their speakers, say on this subject? He said that if he could not procure the disendowment of the Church, he would prefer to see her unmolested; in other words, he did not care about her being disestablished unless he could get her disendowed; if he could do that, and could get his hands on the money, he would do his best to disestablish the Church. If that was a principle of which anyone was proud, all he could say was that he begged to differ. Then, might he quote the language of a statesman of long ago, but who was once a Leader of the Whig Party, and who spoke in the presence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, who supported him afterwards—he meant the opinion of the late Lord Palmerston with regard to the Irish Church? It was in the year 1856, and it was then thought that a Resolution was an easy way of getting an opinion, without much coming of it, as to the disestablishment of the Irish Church. During the Debate Lord Palmerston said—

> "I, for one, am decidedly of opinion that a Church establishment is a proper part of the organisation of a civilised country. Entertaining a deep, a settled, and a rooted conviction that a Church establishment is essential in every country in which it is thought desirable that religion should be diffused and inculcated on the minds of the population, being perfectly determined never to agree to the substitution of the voluntary system for that of an establishment, I feel compelled to vote against the proposition."

Then in the necessities of the case they must find some precedent for disendowment. The Home Secretary was equal to the occasion, for he had said time after time that the disendowment of the Irish Church was an exact precedent for the disendowment of the Church in Wales. Well, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian did not agree with him, for he had said time after time in this House there was a great difference between the two. On the 24th of May, 1870, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The case of the Welsh Church is certainly widely different to that of the Irish Church."

Now they got to an odd state of things. Those who chose to study the question would find in the speeches of those who proposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1868, when the question first arose, that they told the English and Scotch people that they need not be afraid that the English Church or the Established Church in England would suffer, because there was a great difference between the English and the Irish Church; but when they wanted a precedent and the Irish Church had been disestablished, it was easy enough to say the two were alike, and the Irish Church was, they said, an exact precedent for what they desired to do. Let him ask again on what principle they were going to disendow this Church? Could it be asserted by any honest man that the funds of the Church were being misused to-day; could it be asserted by any honest man that these endowments when given were not properly given, were not properly bestowed for a particular object; and was it any reason to say, in support of their argument for disendowment to-day, that in the early part of the century, in days long gone by—thank God for it!—those endowments were not always administered in the best possible manner? The abuses, if they existed, had gone; and if the abuse had disappeared and the endowments were being properly administered, was it not ridiculous, absurd, and dishonest to say that because the property was national therefore the property was to be taken away and divided amongst all parties? He hoped he should not be using too strong language in expressing the opinion that, though it might be Constitutional for the House to take the property away—and anything Parliament did was Constitutional—it was immoral. He ventured to say, further, that if this property was taken away for no better reason than those which had already been given, it would cause some people outside this House to say that the House had disgraced itself. There was another point he would like to put, and that was that if it was for the good of the Church that the Church be disestablished and disendowed, why take three bites, as it was called, at a cherry; why not disendow the lot together; why not offer the same high-handed generosity to the Church in Scotland and the Church in England? If it was for their good, it was for their good in England and Scotland; and if it was good for the Church in England and the Church in Scotland to be disendowed, why hesitate at all? Why, because they did not dare try it. That logically they ought to do it was perfectly clear from a statement made by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said on the 9th of March, 1886—

> "The Church in Wales is so much an integral part of the Church of England that it is not only difficult but impossible to raise the question without disendowing the other; if you raise the question of the Church in Wales you raise the whole question."

And yet they were quite prepared to try to do it, even though they thought that by doing so they were conferring a benefit and a blessing on the Church that they were going to split. He had discovered a prophecy in the pages of *Hansard* which might throw some little light on the reason for the proceedings in this House to-day. A Member who was not known to him, but who might be known to some hon. Members, Dr. Ball, used in this House on the 9th of May, 1871, these remarkable words. Dr. Ball said—

> "For the present the Church is safe; the Church will be defended so long as its defence does not imperil the existence of the Administration, but it will be abandoned as soon as ever their existence is at stake upon this question."

Was it quite certain that the present Administration would ever have come into existence if it had not pledged itself to bring forward this question; was it quite certain that the present Administration, tottering as some thought, would have been able to linger on even as it was if it had not brought forward this question? In this he thought they had the fulfilment of Dr. Ball's prophecy. The Administration was in danger, and they knew that if they did not bring forward this question they would not exist, or, existing, they would not long continue. National sentiment had been talked of as the mandate which compelled the Government to bring forward this Motion. Should nothing be said of another sentiment which they claimed to have; was no attention to be paid, no respect whatever paid to that feeling which they all had for the Church they were born in and brought up in? They might succeed in dragging her down from her traditional platform; they might succeed in making her compete for her very existence in the market-place of individualism; they might even succeed in seeing her humiliated, and perhaps for a time impoverished, and then when all the damage was done, and could not be remedied, the reflection might come to some of them that they had done a great wrong, and injured a Church that was doing a good work. They would resist them to the best of their power, because they believed and knew that their Church was the Church of moderation and liberty. To borrow a figure that had been used, they saw in this that the Government were doing not only the burning of their neighbour's house, but their own party walls in flames, as they believed that it was untrue, as stated by the Home Secretary to-day, that her existence was a constant source of bitterness and animosity. If that existed, it was not caused by the Church. He did not believe it existed to any extent; he believed if they threshed the matter out they would find politics to be at the bottom of it, and jealousy of the endowments of the Church. He did not believe that this bitterness and animosity was found apart from politics. He hoped he had not spoken too warmly, but they were accused of being weak-kneed supporters of the Church, and he knew that to be untrue, and, for his part, he would not only resist the Bill, but if he had his way he would even divide the House upon the First Reading of it. To his Roman Catholic friends and to his Nonconformist friends, who had the same sentiment and the same love for their Churches as Churchmen of the Established Church, he said that to bring about this disestablishment, disendowment, and humiliation of the Church was neither just nor generous.

*MR. BARLOW (Somerset, Frome) said, that though he was not a Welshman nor a Welsh Representative, he had lived a substantial portion of nearly every year of his life in Wales, and had had occasion to take some part in political matters in the Principality, and he said without doubt and without hesitation that the Welsh people had made up their minds that it was fully time that they saw an end of the establishment of the English Church in Wales. This was at the last Election, and for some Elections before, the one important and most burning topic in Wales. It had been stated that it was not before the English constituencies; but he could only say, at any rate in the constituency he had the honour to represent, he referred to the question again and again, and there was no doubt at all what the views of his constituency were. The Welsh people had decided that the English Church did not suit them, and they had provided chapels for themselves, which they supported with a generosity and enthusiasm hardly equalled and never excelled in any part of the world. When they returned nine-tenths of their Representatives pledged to demand that the establishment of the English Church in Wales should cease they, at any rate, who believed in government by the people were bound to pay some attention to that demand. It had been stated that, although there was a vast majority of Welsh Representatives who were in favour of this measure, there were not so large a proportion of Welsh people; but he had never yet heard anyone who had the hardihood to state that the majority of the Welsh people were opposed to disestablishment. He had frequently attended the English churches in Wales. On one occasion he attended where the service was in Welsh, and there were exactly 19 people in the church, counting everybody. He subsequently attended the English service, and he counted over 190 people, and anyone who attended that church and waited outside the chapel doors would see that the Welsh people did not go to the church, but went to the chapels. The people of Wales had decided that they did not believe in a religion which was subject to State patronage and control. They believed they could manage their own affairs better for themselves than others could manage them for them, and he believed the instincts of the Welsh people as regarded this matter were absolutely right. They were told that the case of Wales was not parallel with the case of Ireland. It was not contended, however, that Irish disestablishment had been a failure, and much as disestablishment was wanted in Ireland, when it was enacted it was wanted far more in Wales to-day. The establishment of the English Church in Wales was a grievance to the Welsh people; it was a thing which rankled in their minds as an injustice and as an alien institution; it was the cause of animosity and bitterness and, he would almost say, of class hatred which it must be the duty of every Legislature to try and put to a just end. He appealed to the House most earnestly, because he thoroughly believed in the justice of the claim of the Welsh people, to pass the First Reading of this Bill, so that they might discuss the details hereafter. He heartily hoped that this great desire of the Welsh people would not be denied to them, and that they would be allowed to see that the Parliament of this country did, at any rate, pay some attention to their wishes, which were almost unanimously expressed through their constitutionally-elected Representatives, who were, in many cases, elected almost entirely with a view to this subject. He thought, therefore, the least they could do was to give consideration to this Bill, and see if they could not meet the wishes of the vast majority of the Welsh people, and then he believed they should have done far more than they could do by any one single other measure to convince them that they were willing to govern them upon principles of equity, of justice, and of right.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said, they were told by the right hon. Baronet, who especially represented Welsh opinion in this matter, that there was a great feeling of bitterness on the part of the Church in Wales towards the Nonconformist Body there, and certainly that feeling in some way or other seemed to have influenced a good deal of the Debate they had heard that night. It might, therefore, be useful if he asked the House to consider this question from another point of view—namely, that of Lancashire Conservatism and Churchmanship, where such a feeling as this was quite unknown. They in Lancashire were always ready to appreciate at its highest the good work done by Nonconformist Bodies, and to give them every sort of social and political equality consistent with the existence of the Established Church and the national profession of religion, and they believed that in promoting this harmony and good feeling they were defending by the best means the Church, which was nowhere more popular than in that county. From their point of view, however, they were astonished to find the question of the disestablishment of the Church in Wales treated in this way, because they looked at it from a practical point of view, and asked what good result of a religious, moral, or other kind was to come from this Bill? The right hon. Baronet (Sir G. Osborne Morgan) said that even if a disestablishment Bill were to come from Heaven they (the Opposition) should oppose it. He thought they would wait until that happened. At present they had a strong feeling that that was hardly the source from which Bills which attacked the Church emanated. There were two separate questions involved in a Bill of this kind, and the principal one was that of disendowment. A great deal had been said about the Church being in a minority, and about the numbers of the Church. The right hon. Baronet seemed to think that numbers had a great deal to do with this matter, but in reality as regarded disendowment numbers had nothing to do with it. Assuming for a moment that the Church in Wales was the Church of even a minority of the Welsh people, how could they deal with its endowments? They asked the House to consider and deal with the property in possession of the Church as it would deal with property in possession of other Religious Bodies, or charities, whether educational, eleemosynary, or religious. What the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Charity Trustees would inquire into was whether the property, properly administered, was in excess of the wants of the body that held it, so as to constitute an abuse, and if it were found that that was not so there would be no case made out in any shape or form for attacking the property so held. It might be said that tithes were not property. Undoubtedly, if tithes could be said to be a tax there might be something in the argument derived from numbers, because a tax could only be imposed on everybody when it was for the benefit of the entire community, but the whole foundation of the case in Ireland and of the Bill of that day was that tithe was property like any other property. It had been enjoyed by the Church for several centuries at least, and one inquired what abuse there was in that enjoyment? But the case which could not be contradicted was this: that so far from the property of the Church in Wales being in excess of its requirements it was not enough; that it was a poor Church which had about £279,000 a year which was actually insufficient, the best proof of this being that the voluntary contributions made in aid of that Church were in excess of its income. So that if they went upon the every-day grounds upon which this House received every scheme of charities of all kinds, they were not entitled to touch the property of any Church or institution, whether it had 500,000 people, 40,000, or only 10,000, when they found it was not in excess of its requirements, and that it was well and ably administered. Members opposite attacked the property of a vigorous Church, which was making conversions and great progress, and asked that they should take away its property on grounds which would not apply to Spurgeon's Tabernacle or any other property held by the Nonconformist community. It was upon the ground—without stopping to argue as to the rights of Parliament to interfere with charities or endowments of all kinds where they amounted to an abuse—that there was no abuse at all; that the property was honourably held and properly administered; that they said, whether the numbers be small or great, that no case had been made for touching these endowments. As regarded disestablishment, hon. Members sometimes spoke as if disestablishment was in itself something which would oppress the Nonconformist Body. But even the right hon. Baronet himself had shown that during the last 100 years the English people had done all they could to remove from the Establishment anything which interfered with the social and equal rights of other bodies, and if anything remained which a Nonconformist was entitled to say was a grievance, he was sure no one would be more ready to remove it than the great bulk of English Churchmen. There were some small matters, such as Marriage Laws, which required amendment; but when hon. Members talked of the Establishment in the way they did, they literally argued that the Establishment inflicted certain disabilities upon others. But Establishment, as at present understood, inflicted no injury whatever upon the freedom, or progress, or position of any other religious denomination in England. If that be so, how could they account for this spirit of bitterness in Wales? There was no doubt it was founded upon the notion that the fact that one Religious Body was recognised by the State, was connected with the State, that its Courts were State Courts, and that it had State rights, inflicted a certain amount of social inequality and prejudice upon those who were not members of this Church. He could not help thinking that that was a very exaggerated notion. He could not help thinking that the notion of Nonconformist congregations and their ministers, that they were in any way looked down upon or treated with less consideration than the clergy of the Established Church, was a good deal a matter of their own feeling. All he could say was that in the town he represented, and generally in Lancashire, any of the Nonconformist clergymen who was an able man and did his duty to his congregation was as much respected as any clergymen of the Church of England by the members of that Church. But, whether that were so or not, there could be no doubt that disestablishment would not do away with any grievances of which the hon. Members from Wales complained. If they were to disestablish the Church to-morrow, there still would remain certain matters which would give it that social prestige which no disestablishment could take away from it. The right hon. Baronet complained that the Church was the Church of the wealthy. It was impossible to prevent by any Bill the sort of feeling the people had towards the Church that it was the Church of the wealthy. The right hon. Baronet said it was snobbishness. Whether it was or not it was human nature; it was what the people liked—to frequent the Church which was regarded as the Church of the wealthy, and what the right hon. Gentleman called the education and culture of the country, and no disestablishment would prevent that for a single moment. If the Church in Wales were disestablished to-morrow, all these complaints of which they had heard would exist in an aggravated form. When the great religious movement was started by Whitfield and Wesley, had they this notion about going to chapel in carriages and being thought inferior to the people that went in carriages and being looked down upon by the gentry as not good enough? No; they were sturdy religious men, and they knew, however important it was to belong to large Religious Bodies, there were certain advantages in belonging to a small Religious Body, and they had none of that feeling which seemed to have descended to their descendants, and which showed that snobbishness might not be on one side in this matter. He entreated hon. Members from Wales to remember that they would aggravate any sort of feeling of this kind, rather than diminish it, by disestablishment. Did it not strike Welsh Nonconformists to consider all they owed to establishment, to the sort of semi-establishment which they enjoyed in their own counties, and to the national profession of religion? Let him remind hon. Members from Wales that so far from being independent of the State as they supposed, they were really deriving most enormous advantages from establishment. If they wanted to know what establishment was, let them read some of the pamphlets and speeches lately made in France by those who desired to see the Concordat abolished and no State recognition of religion, and they would see that such advantages as the Nonconformist Bodies in Wales and England enjoyed would be considered establishment in the highest degree by many Continental nations. What did they enjoy? Nonconformist Ministers in Wales were freed from personal immunities, such as freedom from serving on juries, as a recognition of their position by the State. Their chapels were free from taxation—a recognition by the State. They enjoyed equally with the denominational schools of the Church of England grants for education; but, above all, they enjoyed that which no private individual could enjoy—they enjoyed the perpetual succession to their property. Anybody might give them property or endow them with land and buildings, which would be preserved to them for ever. That was an enormous privilege which the State could only give because it recognised the importance of religion and refused to be neutral in the matter. Not only was this the case, but the law was careful to preserve, according to the religious foundation, the doctrines taught in that chapel and to preserve them for that particular form for ever. All these advantages were enjoyed by the Nonconformists of this country, who practically enjoyed the great advantages of establishment equally with the members of the Church of England. There were very few privileges the Church of England had which Nonconformists did not enjoy, and this exceptional and useful position of their own they would very much endanger if they began to attack the holding of property, where property was not in excess of the requirements by any Religious Body whatever. He could not conceive, apart from any grievances of their own, why Nonconformists could not see that this natural profession of religion was for them, as for the Church of England, a great boon and blessing to this country. Indeed, he did not know upon what grounds they could justify even the religious observance of Sunday if the State were to declare itself neutral and had no religion whatever. He had ventured to lay these observations in a moderate, and he hoped a sensible, light before the House. What struck him and every moderate and sensible Churchman anxious for the prosperity and peace of all Religious Denominations in this country was the mischievous and wanton character of an agitation of this kind; wanton because it was no good to anyone in this world, and mischievous because it brought bitterness where there was nothing but good feeling, and tended to destroy that religious peace and concord on which, more than on anything else, depended the prosperity of the nation.

MR. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) remarked that if bitterness had been imported into this controversy—as it had been—it was mainly because of the conduct of many of the Church clergymen who went about with Petitions against the Welsh Suspensory Bill to induce Nonconformists to sign them, and misrepresenting the object of the measure and of those who supported the national claims of Wales. In face of such facts, how could anything else but bitterness prevail? That, however, was not the case generally. They could discriminate between men and the system.

The other day he had the opportunity of showing that in his own person. The members of the council of the South Wales College were called together to nominate a President of the College. Some five-sixths of the members were Nonconformists, and what did they do? He had the honour of proposing that great man who, thank God! was now recovering, the Dean of Llandaff, as President, a proposition which was seconded by another Nonconformist and carried unanimously. There was a reason for that, because the Dean never did anything of the character they complained of other members of the Church of England doing. The hon. Member had said that the clergymen of the Established Church treated the Nonconformist ministers kindly in a social sense. So they did, of course; but he would tell the hon. Gentleman that they had to thank the Nonconformist ministers of the past for the religious state in which Wales was to-day; and yet those men did not stand so high socially in the eye of the law as the most insignificant curate. That was what the Nonconformists of Wales complained of and wanted to have changed. So far as he could learn, Church property in this country was created by a King who, having committed murder, in expiation of his offence commanded one-tenth of the land to be given to the Church. They were now going to devote the money to a far better purpose than that King intended. In the United States and in our English-speaking colonies, not only did they do very well without tithes, but very much better. Something had been said as to the progress of the Church of England in Wales. He admitted that in some cases the Church of England did very well indeed; but under what circumstances? Just where the Church of England received the least in tithes she succeeded the most. He lived near a large town which he thought afforded the greatest example of the progress of the Church of England in Wales. There were some 21 places of worship and nearly 30 clergy. All they had in the way of tithes was £250 a year. From Queen Anne's Bounty and tithes together they received about £1,000 a year to carry on that great work. They had, however, during the last 10 years raised in that place by voluntary subscriptions some £60,000. Whenever the Church followed the example of the Nonconformists and trusted to the generosity of her sons and daughters she did well. He was glad and proud to be in the House of Commons that evening on the introduction of such a Bill. The Welsh people were under an undying debt of gratitude to the Home Secretary for the able manner in which he had brought in the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken in the spirit of the great majority of the people of Wales. Personally speaking, he did not think the question was one of numbers. They would leave statistics aside; they did not want them at all to prove their case. He maintained that if every man, woman, and child in the Principality were within the pale of the Established Church the case for disestablishment would be as strong then as it was at present. The question was not one of statistics, but one of principle. But disestablishment had made great progress in the minds of men since the franchise had been lowered. The great majority of people in the Principality looked upon the Church as nothing else than a badge of servitude, and, for his own part, he was proud of sitting in a House of Commons in which a Bill for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales had been introduced.

*Mr. GRIFFITH - BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said, he was afraid he could not follow the hon. Member who had just sat down into his historical researches. In his reading he had been unable to come across the King who, according to the hon. Gentleman, had instituted tithes in this country. He doubted that the hon. Member could tell the name of that King, because tithes had been the growth of years, and had been given bit by bit by the great Lords and landowners of the country to the Church for Church purposes. Neither the Government nor the State had endowed the Church as a whole, and to talk of a King, whether foreign, English, or Welsh, as having established tithes, was to revel in the realm of imagination, which was far distant from the realm of history. He confessed that the friends of the Church who sat upon the Opposition side of the House and who were determined to defend the Church must congratulate themselves upon the fact that they at last knew what the Government proposals with regard to disestalishment in Wales were. The Government proposed to take away all the Church endowments in Wales previously to 1703, and the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary appeared to think that they had been very lenient to the Church in not fixing the date at 1820. The fact was, however, that there were very few Church endowments between 1703 and 1820, while most of the Nonconformist endowments in Wales had been given since the beginning of the present century. Therefore, by taking the date 1703 the right hon. Gentleman very cleverly took away nearly everything that belonged to the Church and left nearly everything that belonged to the Nonconformists. The tithes and endowments were to be taken away, and how were they to be used? They were to be used for allotments, for National Art Museums—he wondered the right hon. Gentleman did not add for village music-halls—for everything except religion, the purpose for which they were originally given. Not only the endowments, but the fabrics in some cases were to be taken away, and the cathedrals were to be declared to be national monuments, vested in a purely secular body which was to give a permit for their use for religious services. And yet the Home Secretary got up and declared that no injustice would be inflicted on the Church. It was said that all this was for the benefit of the Church, and that it would remove religious bitterness, as it had been removed in Ireland. But had religious bitterness been entirely removed in Ireland by the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland? Had there been no religious quarrels in Ireland since 1870? Had the Home Secretary never heard of the Belfast riots, or of the religious quarrels in Cork within the past month? To say that the Irish Church Act had removed all religious bitterness and settled the religious question in Ireland was to state what was not true historically. If they took away the Church in Wales assuredly they would have happening in Wales what had happened in Ireland. From attacking the Church hon. Members from Wales would proceed to attack the land, and from a demand for separate treatment in respect to the Church and land they would next demand Home Rule for Wales. In fact, the Welsh Radical Members were going to play the same game that the Irish Nationalists had played. First, to destroy the Church; then to plunder the landlords, and next to have a separate Parliament. He had never known a Bill introduced to Parliament with so few reasons advanced in support of it. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had said that it was not necessary to go into the reasons why this attack should be made on the Church in Wales, and he referred to the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had not done so in regard to the Irish Church in 1869. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had pointed out in 1869 that it was not necessary to go into reasons, because the question had been discussed during the whole of the year in the House of Commons and in the country; that a General Election had taken place upon it; that it had led to the overthrow of a Government, and that, consequently, as the arguments for and against the measure were well known to everybody, there was no necessity to discuss the Bill fully in the House of Commons. Could the right hon. Gentleman really pretend that there was any parallel between the Welsh case and the Irish case? They had not had the discussion which preceded the Irish Bill. Last year they had had the Suspensory Bill, and they had had the matter discussed in a certain sense in the country, but entirely by the Church Party, with the result that that Bill had been petitioned against by one-quarter of the whole adult population of Wales. Was the Home Secretary certain that his plundering policy was popular even among the Welsh Nonconformists? At a Nonconformist meeting held in Carnarvon on March 28 last year speeches were made against the Bill, and it was pointed out that disendowment might next be applied to other denominations and institutions. Mr. E. H. Owen, a Presbyterian, said at that meeting—

> "If spoliation commences by the rights and privileges of one Church being disturbed by the Welsh Suspensory Bill, what is there to prevent it from being extended, and perhaps in a short

time to all the different sects? Money has been collected for Bala College. What guarantee have we that it will not be used for purposes different to that for which it is intended? I certainly protest against the thin end of the wedge being driven in by the passing of the Welsh Suspensory Bill."

And Mr. R. W. Williams, an Independent, said—

> "It was a Bill the spirit of which was that until August, 1894, all the emoluments of the clergy in Wales were to be held subject to the pleasure of Parliament. He would like to put it to those labouring in the vineyard, whether they for a moment would like to have their emoluments and salaries placed at the disposal of the State, or to be held subject to the pleasure of Parliament"?

There was, therefore, evidence that even amongst the Welsh Nonconformists the Suspensory Bill was not so popular as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to suppose. If the analogy of the Irish Church was to be carried out, why was it not carried out in every detail? There were two reasons which operated in the case of Ireland. How far were they applicable in the present case? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, in stating the case with reference to Ireland, said there were two great reasons why the Church ought to be disestablished and disendowed—first, because the Church was the Church of the very small minority in Ireland; secondly, because the Church in Ireland, far from being progressive, was positively going back.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): That is not true now.

Mr. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN asked, how far these arguments applied to the Welsh case? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had proved that the Irish Church was the Church of only one-tenth of the population. Would any hon. Member assert that with respect to the Welsh Church? How did that argument apply in the present case? The hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon had put the population belonging to the Church in Wales at one-tenth, and the Member for Flintshire put it at one-fourth. Well, he took the four leading Nonconformist sects—the Independents, the Wesleyans, the Baptists, and the Calvinistic Methodists—and, all told, including adherents who had been described in the Congregational Year Book as men who were members, men who were not members, old men, and young men, children, anybody who even went to a chapel—and he dared say he himself had been included because he had often been to Welsh chapel meetings—and, all told, they amounted to 832,357. In other words, on their own showing the Nonconformists in Wales who asked them to disestablish and disendow the Church were less than one-half. Supposing the Churchpeople were only one-quarter, what followed? At least one-quarter of the people in Wales did not go to any place of worship at all; but if they took the figures of the hon. Member for Carnarvon, then 42 per cent. of the people did not attend places of worship. Yet hon. Gentlemen opposite would get up and say that Wales was the most religious part of the United Kingdom. The figures he had quoted proved that the statements which had been made as to the weakness of the Church in Wales were absolutely unfounded. Churchmen were anxious to bring this matter to the test of figures, and were prepared to abide by the result of a religious Census, but they had been prevented from having it by the action of the Nonconformists. It was further alleged in the case of Ireland that the Church was not progressing. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had stated that at the rate the Church of Ireland had converted the Roman Catholics during the last 50 years it would take 1,500 or 2,000 years to complete the conversion. He contended, from knowledge he had, that the Church in Wales at the present moment was making most extraordinary and rapid progress in every way, and not only, as the right hon. Baronet the Member for Denbighshire had said, in the matter of fabrics. He himself had been to many places where newly-built churches were not big enough for the people who wished to go to them. ["Where"?] He would mention Brymbo, the place where the right hon. Baronet used to live. The increase in the church there had been so great that he believed the right hon. Gentleman had left the place, and lives there no longer. If they wished to know who were not progressing, but were falling back, it was the Nonconformists. He made that statement not on his own responsibility, but on that of the Welsh Nonconformist journals

The Goleuad, a celebrated Nonconformist paper, in February, 1888, made the following statement:—

> "There has been a fearful falling off during the past year. Scarcely one-third of the members attend the Church meetings. The number of candidates under the charge of the ministers is small and becoming less. It is useless to conceal the fact that the state of the Association is very unsatisfactory.

Two years later the same paper had the following:—

> "One matter we have to complain of in Cardiganshire is the weakness of many of our churches. The chief evils that afflict us are unchastity, drunkenness, and a spirit of disputation. The churches have gradually sunk into a state of indifference."

The Banner, another Welsh Nonconformist paper, wrote these suggestive sentences—

> "One of the greatest gifts of God is a true leader. The absence of Moses was a serious period to the Israelites, and it was shown that Aaron could not take his place. We do not suggest for one moment that our Connection is without a leader; we believe that there are as good leaders as we ever had. But there are times when a leader is specially wanted; and we are in that condition now. We have many an Aaron glib of tongue; we do not allege that we have not a Moses; but we ask the question lest he may be among us and we cannot see him."

They had, therefore, the Nonconformists admitting that it was they themselves who were in danger in Wales. He would now quote the evidence of a leading Churchman to show the great progress of the Church in Wales. The Bishop of Llandaff said at Rhyl, on the 9th of October, 1891—

> "During the eight years I have been Bishop of Llandaff I have ordained 206 deacons against 99 by my predecessor in the same number of years. Seventy additional curates have been engaged in my diocese during the past eight years, and the salary of each, £120, represents an additional outlay of £8,000 per annum going out of the pockets of the Church laity in my diocese. Upon church buildings and restorations £230,000 have been spent during the eight and a-half years of my episcopate, against £60,000 during the eight years my predecessor was in office. . . . . Another convincing proof of Church revival is to be found in the fact that during the first three years of my episcopate I confirmed 10,300 candidates, as against 7,200 by my predecessor, whilst during the past three years the candidates confirmed in my diocese numbered 12,400. I have received the returns of the baptism of 1,600 adults, the great majority of these being Baptists belonging to one Nonconformist denomination. I have with me a list of the names of eight Nonconformist ministers who have written imploring me to receive them into the Church."

He ventured to say the Church in Wales was not a dying Church, but a living and progressive Church. That was a reason against this Bill being passed into law. There was no cause for intervention, except it was that hon. Members who promoted this legislation wanted to strike at once for fear that the Church would grow so strong that afterwards they could not attack her. So much for the argument that the case of the Church in Wales was parallel with the case of the Church in Ireland. Now he came to another argument. They were told that the Church in Wales was an alien Church. He was very much surprised to hear that old argument brought up again, for he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had dispelled that argument when he proved time after time that the Church in Wales was the lineal descendant of the old British Church. The Church of Wales had existed for centuries. [Mr. W. Johnston: Even before the Church of Rome.] Yes, the Church of Rome was brought over by St. Augustine in the 6th century, whereas the Church in Wales existed in the 2nd century. He would like to point out that this argument, that the Church in Wales was an alien Church, would not bear examination by the light of history. They were told last year by the late Member for Montgomeryshire that it was an alien Church because it was a Church of conquest. Mr. Watkin Williams, in introducing his Motion, did not go so far back as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian. But even he said that the Union took place in the 12th century—that was to say, 150 years before Edward I. conquered Wales. How, then, could it be a Church of Conquest? If they examined into the history of that time it became clear that the two Churches were so mixed up together then that it was impossible to distinguish them. During the time of Edward the Confessor the diocese of Hereford was administered by a Welsh Bishop, but he did not know whether hon. Members opposite would regard this as an English conquest or a Welsh conquest. The fact was that the Churches had grown together for their mutual advantage, and now for over 1,000 years at least the Church in Wales and the Church in England had been one Church. To-night, without a single reason being adduced, they were asked to tear the two Churches asunder. He should oppose the Bill, not merely because the Church in Wales was the National Church, and to destroy it would be to destroy the finest National Institution in the Principality, but because the Church in Wales could not be destroyed without the Church in England being destroyed also. The Home Secretary tried to draw a line between the two Churches. In doing that he must settle with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in 1886, said—

> "The Church of England in Wales is so much an integral part of the Established Church of England that it is not only difficult but impossible to raise the question as a separate one or to deal with the one without involving the other."

He would like to know how the Chancellor of the Exchequer reconciled his position with that of his colleague. There was not an argument which applied to the Church in Wales in this matter which did not apply equally to the Church in England. The two Churches were so bound together by law, constitution, and history that they could not be separated. Were they to regard this Bill as leading up to the disestablishment of the Church in England? He maintained that the reasons brought forward in support of the Bill were altogether unsatisfactory and insufficient. The Bill was inopportune, there was no popular demand for it, and it had never been discussed either at the polls or, to any extent, in that House. To suddenly ask the House to pass this Bill was to ask a task of the House of Commons which the House he hoped would refuse to take upon itself. He hoped the House would see, before they destroyed and plundered this national ancient Church, that its opponents should have some better reasons to adduce, and, moreover, that they should have the country behind them.

MR. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen, E.) said, the hon. Gentleman had told them that this question of Welsh disestablishment had not been discussed at the polls. He wondered if the hon. Gentleman had been in Wales during the General Election, or during any bye-election within the last 15 years. If he had been there, he would have found that this matter had been very largely discussed. In fact, it seemed to him that the Welsh Members had had but one cry for a very long time past, and that was disestablishment and disendowment of the Church. The reason for this was obvious. The Welsh people were a Radical people, but the Church people in Wales were strong Tories. The clergyman in nearly every case was a Tory, and when the Church and the great body of the people were in strong antagonism there seemed to him in that very fact a strong reason for the disestablishment of the Church. The people were dissatisfied with the present state of things, and therefore it was the duty of the House to go to the root of the evil and to put it right. The only way in which you could get good government was to govern the people in the way in which they wished. When the Church of a country was opposed to the wishes of the people it was not a National Church. They had heard of a little meeting in Carnarvon, and they were told it was a representative meeting of the people of Wales, but he must say he was astounded that any hon. Members who had been in Wales should have the courage to come there to-night and make such statements as they had heard. Any man who had lived in Wales knew that with the exception of small districts in the country and small centres in the large towns the people were nearly all Nonconformists—the labourers, and the shopkeepers, and all the rest were Nonconformists—it was only the squire, and the clergymen, and their dependents who were Church people. That was evident to every man who had lived in Wales. He knew of one district which was not so Radical as other districts where there were only one or two families going to the church, while there were two Nonconformist chapels almost full every morning and evening. Within four miles of that place there was a church in ruins, and the services were held in the national schoolroom, while in that same parish there were two or three chapels well attended—that was in Pembrokeshire, which was not so Radical as his own county. In his own county there did not appear to be a man against disestablishment, and actually when a candidate was brought down there to oppose him, his opponents knew it was no use to put up anybody who was not in favour of disestablishment, and the candidate had to say that he would vote for disestablishment. The result all the same was that he (Mr. Thomas) had a majority of pretty nearly four to one; and that was the position in nearly every county in Wales at the present moment, and for hon. Members to say that disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales was not demanded by the people showed either that they had not been in Wales at all to judge for themselves, or if they had been there they must have closed their eyes to what was going on about them, and to the evidence of the feeling of the people upon this matter. With regard to tithes, he maintained they were originally given for three purposes—the relief of the poor, education, and religion. They were to be devoted to these three objects, and not to one of them only, and he rejoiced to think that the ultimate effect of this Bill would be to restore these funds to their old uses for the benefit of the nation, and take them out of the hands of those who had been using them for so many years merely for the purpose of increasing the power of the Conservative Party, especially in the country districts where the Church had no hold on the people. [*A cry of* "Oh!"] Yes, he was literally accurate in so speaking of the country districts. Although he agreed that in the large towns like Cardiff and Swansea, where there were large populations, a proportion of which were dependent upon the Church as it were, the Church had succeeded very well, he contended that in the country districts the Church was now what it had been for many years—a total failure. The hon. Gentleman ended up his speech by telling Members that the Church in Wales was the finest national institution that Welshmen ever had. He did not mean to say that that was not the honest opinion of his hon. Friend, but his own view was that Welshmen were the best judges as to what were their best institutions, and Welshmen had come to an emphatic conclusion about the National Church in Wales, which was that it was a failure. There was no man in the House who could say it was not a failure if he conceded the fact that there were not one-quarter of the inhabitants of Wales who believed in the Church as the Church of the people. This was not the first time they had had a discussion upon this subject in the House. He remembered two or three discussions, and they had had speeches to-night from hon. Members which they had heard any time before during the last five or six years. All the Welsh Members had made up their minds about this measure; in Wales the minds of the people had been made up for a long time. In order, as he had said, to secure good government they must give the people what they wanted. The Welsh people wanted disestablishment and disendowment, and the Government would satisfy them by giving them this measure, and the sooner their legislation became effective the better it would be for all concerned—for the Church and for the people. He was convinced that the result of the measure would be this: When the Church in Wales was disestablished and disendowed she would be a successful Religious Body, which she was not at the present time. That was not a view that he was giving to them for the first time that night, but one which he had always given to his constituents. Most of his constituents were Nonconformists, and they believed with him that the Church, once free from the trammels of the State, would be successful, and very successful, throughout the whole of the more thickly-populated districts of Wales, and they hoped she might even succeed more than hitherto in the country districts. With regard to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, he desired to say that he for one had never had the pleasure of listening to a clearer explanation of a Bill. At the same time, he did not mean to say that this measure satisfied all his aspirations. He could have hoped for a little more; but he would not go into that now, because he did not think that the occasion of the First Reading of a Bill was one for picking holes in it. He believed that, speaking generally, it would satisfy his constituents as it satisfied him. It was his belief that the Bill was the beginning of a better condition of things in Wales. When it had done its work, they would find Churchmen and Nonconformists in Wales approaching each other in a kinder spirit, standing on the same platform, instead of as at present standing the one on one side and the other on the other side. He was afraid that perhaps one of the results of this might be that the Welsh would not be so Radical as they were now. Disestablishment and disendowment would tend to make them more Conservative, but it would be better for the country when this evil was removed, when Nonconformists and Churchmen would meet as equals, and not as men one of whom thought himself superior to the other, and when the Religious Bodies of the Principality would all be placed on the same footing.

*Sir R. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, he did not think that the House would expect an apology from him for intervening in the present Debate. At any rate, he was not one of those who was open to the accusation made by his hon. and learned Friend who had just spoken of wishing to say again what he had said on a previous occasion, for he had never addressed the House on that subject before. The subject was one to which he had for many years given a great deal of close attention. He had had an intimate knowledge and acquaintance with the state of things that existed in South Wales, and was more intimately acquainted than perhaps hon. Gentlemen might think with the affairs of the Church in the Principality. He must admit, however, that he had not the same knowledge of North Wales. Before going further, he should like to add his respectful tribute to the speech of the Home Secretary. It was not possible for him to agree with the right hon. Gentleman's views, but he felt that the whole House must be indebted to him for the clear and well-arranged statement he put before the House, which had enabled them all to appreciate what the proposals of the Government were. There were one or two speeches which followed the Home Secretary's which he thought worthy of notice. He would refer, first, to that of the hon. Member who had just sat down. Some time since they heard an exposition from the Prime Minister as to the conditions which would induce him to vote for or against disestablishment. He thought the candour of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for East Carmarthen would have led them to the conclusion that his main reason for voting for disestablishment was that the majority of the members of the Church which they were asked to disestablish and disendow were opposed to him in their political views. [Mr. Abel Thomas: No.] It was difficult to put any other construction upon the hon. Member's language. All he could say with regard to that was that he did not think it lay in the mouths of Radical Members for Wales to criticise any political agitation proceeding from the Church of England. If it were the right time and the proper opportunity to quote the language of the Welsh vernacular Press he could quote passage after passage to show that the Welsh Press, nine-tenths of the newspapers of which were controlled by Nonconformists, had been doing its utmost to make this a political question. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that the Church in Wales was not the church of the poor or of the labouring class. He was not going to understate any argument or suggest any figures as to majorities or numbers, but he was going to state, and would be prepared at the proper occasion to substantiate with details, that if any person suggested that the Church of England in Wales was not becoming more and more the Church of the labourer and of the poor he was wholly ignorant of what the work of the Church in Wales had been and of what the Church was now doing. Now he would come to the speech of the Home Secretary, and he confessed that he shared the opinions of his right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) and his astonishment at the way in which this Bill had been presented to the House. There was no fault to find with the lucidity of statement or with the exposition of details. But with regard to this Bill, with regard to this Debate, the most important Debate initiated in this House during this Session — because this was practically the first time that the proposal had been brought forward by the Government to disestablish the Church of England—the right hon. Gentleman had thought it enough to initiate it in a few general terms, with a few general propositions, without venturing to give the House the slightest arguments in its support. It seemed to him that that was contrary to all Parliamentary precedent. He would not refer to the precedent of the Irish Church Debate, for attention had already been called to that; but he would venture to observe that the Member for Midlothian thought fit to introduce the Bill which they all remembered so well—the Home Rule Bill of 1886—in a speech in which he spent an hour and a half in expounding the necessity for the change. His complaint, therefore, was—and it was a complaint which the House was entitled to make—that no Minister of the Crown, no Government was entitled to come down and propose a scheme for such a vast change, and to assume as the basis of his argument propositions which he knew were seriously contested by practically every one of his opponents. It was all very well to say that the House had expressed an opinion on the question of fact. It was not enough to say that because 32 or 33 Members for Wales were in favour of it that was sufficient to justify the proposal. The right hon. Gentleman would understand that he (Sir R. Webster) did not impute anything which he was not prepared to justify in argument. But what were the propositions which the right hon. Gentleman had told them he was prepared to justify, and which he would assume, and which would only occupy a moment or two in expounding? The first was that the Church in Wales was the Church of a comparatively small minority. If the right hon. Gentleman had followed the Debates on this question—if he had listened to the Debate initiated by the Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) two years ago and the Debate on his own Suspensory Bill last year—he would know that not only was that statement not accepted by the opponents of Disestablishment, but was disputed by them, and that they showed that the Nonconformists did not dare to take a census on the question.

*Mr. ASQUITH: Then may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he asserts that the supporters of the Establishment in Wales are not a minority of the people of that Principality?

Sir R. WEBSTER said, that the right hon. Gentleman had left out the most important words, for he had said that not only was that Church the Church of the minority, but of a comparatively small minority, and he knew quite well that from the point of view of the Opposition that was a very material distinction. It was all very well to bring in Calvinists, Baptists and Wesleyans, but they had to look at the Church as a body—at its work for good, for the spread of education, for the spread of religion—compared with other bodies; and if he affirmed they were to take all the combined Nonconformist bodies, and put them together, and even include the Roman Catholics, which on a question of this kind they had no right to do, it would be found that the English Church in Wales and the Nonconformist bodies would be very nearly equally divided. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] He cared not for jeers or sneers from the other side of the House. They would not prevent him saying what was his distinct conviction from the investigation he had been able to make into this matter. If the figures which Mr. Gee had so carefully suppressed for years had been brought out the Church would have been found to embrace among its members something approaching one-half of the population of the country. The right hon. Gentleman must not misunderstand him. He (Sir R. Webster) might be right or he might be wrong, but the Home Secretary had no right to assume for the purposes of this Debate that the Church only represented a comparatively small minority. He gave all credit to his right hon. Friend for sincerity of purpose; but the next proposition which he had asked the House to assume was one which ought never to have been made to the House. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Church in Wales was associated with injurious and humiliating memories. Did he refer to the period when clergymen who were appointed had not sufficient knowledge of the Welsh language? No one regretted that more than he did. Or did the right hon. Gentleman refer to the time when there was a great deal of absenteeism from cures both in England and Wales? No one deplored those periods more than he did. But speaking of the history of the Church of Wales and its leading events, not for the last 20 or 30 years, but, as he had traced them, for centuries, it was untrue to say that there were any more injurious or humiliating memories associated with the Church in Wales than with the history of the English Church, or any other Church. Everybody had to lament the condition of things which existed in the 18th century with regard to Church life. But that was happily long past, and to found the present action towards the Church on that state of things was as just as to condemn a man, against whose character nothing could be said, because in his youth he had committed indiscretions. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that the Welsh Church was the symbol of national discord. What did he mean? When had national discord arisen in any other sense than it arose wherever there were established and dominant churches for which bodies had from time to time broken away? Did the right hon. Gentleman suggest that because there were Methodists, Calvinists, Baptists, and Congregationalists in Wales, the Church was a symbol of national discord? Did he pretend that those persons who belonged to the Nonconformist bodies were more or less Welsh than those who adhered to the National Church? The fact was that the working classes, who in large numbers were members of the Church, would be found to be as devoted to the national language and literature, and to possess the national sentiment, just as strongly as the Calvinists, or Baptists, or Wesleyans. He said that when the right hon. Gentleman came to prove before this House that the existence of the Church in Wales was a symbol of national discord, he would find himself unable to divide the two classes into one opinion or the other. All the right hon. Gentleman could do was to say that the Church in Wales in years gone by had been so conducted that there were now greater signs of dissent in some parts of Wales than there would be in corresponding districts of England. It was a proposition that he denied that the existence of the Church in Wales was a symbol of national discord. The next proposition of the right hon. Gentleman which they were asked to assume was that the Church was an aggressive sectarian power. What did the right hon. Gentleman mean? Was the desire to build churches and to go among the poor work which the right hon. Gentleman would deprecate? Was the desire to bring men into the fold of the Church work which the right hon. Gentleman would endeavour to prevent? What right had the right hon. Gentleman to speak of the aggressive sectarian power of the Church unless he applied those epithets to the activity of the Church? The activity of the Church was the activity of her ministers and Bishops, and it had led men to go out into the hills and valleys of Wales and, with no great remuneration for themselves, to pass their days in endeavouring to spread what they believed was true religion among the people. There was no more aggressive sectarian power in the vitality of the Church than in that of any other Church which desired to spread its doctrines and enlarge its membership. What had the Baptists and Calvinists and Methodists been doing all over the country except to endeavour to spread their own teaching? It was not, in his opinion, a just way of dealing with the question to attribute to the Church such a description without telling the House what was meant, leaving them to assume from the right hon. Gentleman's language that such epithets were a proper description of the Church's work. They were told that the Church had been singled out because it enjoyed from the State a patrimony which the Nonconformists regarded as theirs. In his view, the Nonconformists had been most improperly led by misrepresentations of history and of justice and equity to believe that property which had been dedicated to religious purposes was theirs in the sense that they were entitled to devote it to other purposes than that to which it was originally dedicated. It was in that sense that the Nonconformists of Wales had been taught to believe that the Church revenue was their property and patrimony. He could not hope within the limits of time at his disposal to deal exhaustively with the propositions of the Home Secretary, but there was one reason why he wished now to make his protest against the assumption that these propositions would not permit of any denial or any refutation. He thought it was extremely doubtful whether they would ever have another opportunity of dealing with the question. He did not know whether hon. Members from Wales were altogether satisfied with the position of matters. It was not necessary for him to surmise whether they were satisfied with the details of the Bill. He understood the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to say that he had never heard of Mr. Gee. Probably what the right hon. Gentleman meant was that his proposals were not taken from Mr. Gee's paper.

Mr. ASQUITH: I said I had never seen his scheme.

Sir R. WEBSTER said, he had read that scheme very carefully, and it looked as if the language of the Bill had been drawn by some person who had a most intimate knowledge of Mr. Gee. There was a marvellous running together of ideas and phrases and expressions. With regard to the way in which it was proposed to deal with departures from the Irish Church Bill, there was a remarkable family likeness between the Bill which the Home Secretary had presented and the scheme which was fully discussed in Wales under Mr. Gee's auspices. He desired the House to appreciate the position of matters and the number of persons affected by the Bill. They were dealing with a religious establishment ministering to a population of 1,780,000 people. It had 1,010 benefices and 1,488 clergymen. It was a very remarkable circumstance that, speaking of the period of this century, the number of clergymen had increased from 700 to 1,488. He thought it was fair to say that that was a direct indication of the vitality of the Church. One of the charges brought against the Church in Wales was that unnecessary churches had been built and money unnecessarily spent, having regard to the requirements of the people, but he did not think the charge had ever been made that the Church had too many clergymen. Certainly the stipends of the clergy were not such as to attract the clergy. The average stipend in the Principality was only about £143, and, in view of endowments in some cases, it was clear that a large proportion of the clergy in Wales were working for a mere pittance—under £100 a year—and yet were doing good work for the Church in which they believed, and were certainly not doing it for the mere sake of the stipend. He would like in justice to refer to the money spent upon the cathedrals, which the Home Secretary proposed to take entirely out of the care of the Church and to hand over to a body constituted they knew not how. In the restoration of the three cathedrals of Llandaff, St. Asaph, and St. David's, no less a sum than £450,000 had been spent during the present century; and, although some portion had no doubt been the money of Nonconformists, who recognised the value of the treasures they possessed, most of that sum had been contributed by Churchmen. If the Bill reached a later stage he hoped an opportunity would be afforded for bringing before the House what amount had been voluntarily expended upon churches and parsonages, Church schools, and kindred establishments—and this, too, at a time when it was asserted by the Home Secretary and others that the Church had not been fulfilling her responsibilities. Another point he wanted to touch upon was the suggestion put forward that the Church in Wales was not the Church of the poor but of the rich, not the Church of the many but of the few. He had no wish to overstate the work of the Church. The real test of the work which the Church was doing was to be found in those places where there was a growing population. In the Rhondda Valley, which was almost entirely a working-class population, the Bishop of Llandaff, who had been in the See for 10 or 11 years, had during the past three years consecrated five new Churches, and before that he had consecrated six others. Those Churches had been built almost wholly out of contributions by working men, and the astonishing part of the matter was that, even during the periods of strikes and depression, working men had still come forward with their contributions to the Church. [Mr. Asquith: Hear, hear!] The right hon. Gentleman cheered that statement, but there was no indication of it in his speech. The Leader of the Welsh Party had come forward and spoken of the Church as the Church of the wealthy. There was one fact which had not, perhaps, come within the knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman. He had no personal knowledge of the matter, but it was given to him on good authority—it was, that in the diocese of St. Asaph, although he was not personally acquainted with it, there were no less then 90 parishes in which the clergyman of the Church of England was the only minister of religion. It was by the examination of such details as these that the real work of the Church could be appreciated. It was not just or right to say that the Church was "the symbol of national discord." The right hon. Gentleman had spoken as though the Church had not been increasing its influence over the people. He really thought if they were discussing this matter outside the House hon. Members from Wales would not deny that the influence of the Church had been increasing. But there was one other aspect of the case which should not be lost sight of, and that was that the prosperity of the Nonconformist Churches was not increasing. ["Oh!"] He hoped he should be permitted to state his case. He courted investigation of the matter. He would take the Calvinists. From 1884 to 1886, according to their own Returns, there was a decrease of 4,244 communicants. There was a decrease in the same period of £6,051 in their collections, and what was more important, there was an increase of debt upon the chapels of £76,192. With regard to the Baptists, there was a decrease in three years, from 1883 to 1886, of 56 clergymen, and there was a decrease between 1884 and 1886 of 432 members of the Baptist community. These figures might be supplemented with others relating to various denominations, though he did not say to the same extent. Therefore, he contended that the state of the Nonconformist Church at the present time was not as prosperous as it was five, or six, or eight years ago. This led him to think that probably the Nonconformists thought this was an opportune time to attack the Church in Wales. What was the testimony of a Nonconformist as to the work of the Church? Perhaps one of the most distinguished Nonconformists, speaking on this subject, said that—

> "In the whole history of Christendom there is no such remarkable religious progress as that made by the Church of England in Wales in the last 50 years."

And this was the time that was chosen by the Nonconformist bodies to put in array their forces against the Church of England. Perhaps they thought that if they were to have any chance they had better make the struggle before the Church further strengthened her position; before the Nonconformists ceased to be able to say, as the Nonconformists on the whole had some claim to say, that they represented the majority of the Welsh people. Now he came to that which was the most important point. What was this property which they were intending to divert from the purposes to which it was now devoted? They were not standing there as lawyers, so far as the purposes of this argument was concerned. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that the property was the property of each individual benefice. Upon that extraordinary argument the right hon. Gentleman contended that he was justified in diverting the property to parochial and other purposes. They had heard that night of some King who, because he had committed a murder, directed that the tithe should be appropriated to the purposes to which it was appropriated. He believed that no one who had ever investigated the origin of the tithe had ever given that account of it. He did not understand what the Home Secretary and others who had spoken meant when they spoke of tithe as national property. He knew of a national literature, of national poetry, and of the National Debt, but he could only understand national property to mean property legally or equitably contributed by the nation. It was well known, as far as the Church of England was concerned, that the only direct contribution made to it by the State was the £2,500,000 contributed at the beginning of this century. He respectfully submitted that no one had ever been able to establish the proposition which justified the suggestion that tithes were national property. He said this, because he thought it was one of the cardinal points upon which the reason for this attempted spoliation rested. Ignorant persons had been led to believe that the tithe was something that the State had diverted from other purposes to the purposes of the Church. Even so eminent a lawyer as the hon. Member for Carmarthen had said that the tithe was originally appropriated to the poor, or to charity, or to education. He did not believe that to be an accurate statement. Whatever might have been the original appropriation, it was an appropriation by the State. It was an appropriation made from time to time by the individual State. There was no justice or warrant for the suggestion that any appropriation was made by the nation in respect of national property being devoted to this purpose. His point with regard to the matter was that for a great number of years the tithe had been devoted to purposes for which it was originally appropriated by the dedication and at the will of those who might have appropriated it to other purposes. It could not be denied that this property had hitherto been employed in the cause of religion; and this was not a scheme of reform by which it was proposed to do the religious work better. The proposal was to take the money away from religious and apply it to secular purposes, and those purposes were inconsistent with the origin of the property and its historic use. The scheme laid the Government open to serious accusation. The secular purposes included the provision of trained nurses; and then came district halls. They knew what halls were to be used for; that came out in the discussions on the Parish Councils Bill. They would be the scenes of agitated political meetings, of rivalry between competing candidates. Could that be reconciled with the original intention with which the money was given to Church purposes? The purposes also included education and—

> "Any other purpose of local and general utility not provided for out of the rates."

Yes, but most of these objects could be provided for out of the rates. It was obvious ignorant people would be led to suppose that disestablishment would relieve their own pockets. The intention might be disclaimed, but not the effect. Translations from the vernacular Press had been quoted in the House by Mr. Byron Reed which indicated that the advocates of disestablishment did not hesitate to put this view before the people. No one who had studied the subject even superficially, no one who had made himself acquainted with the history of the Welsh Church, could have the slightest doubt that for centuries private benefactors, with large-hearted charity and great benevolence, had set aside funds for the greatest and most sacred purpose that man could conceive—namely, the worship of Almighty God according to the Christian faith. He could understand a proposal that these funds should be taken, and under the direction of wise men distributed among bodies thought to be carrying on the same work in a better way. But this proposal was not made upon any such ground. The Calvinist, Methodist, and Wesleyan Bodies in Wales did not dare to ask that these funds should be diverted directly to their own purposes, for they knew that that would be downright spoliation and robbery. No; they did not make that claim, but they were trying to do indirectly what they dared not do directly. They could not ask for contributions from the funds of the Church towards the maintenance of their own chapels and the stipends of their ministers, but they asked for contributions towards the parish room, the public library, and other purposes, and thus hoped to spare themselves expenditure. But it was scarcely less unjust, if at all, to strive to appropriate funds indirectly than to ask for them directly. He wished that hon. Members opposite could vote upon this measure uncontrolled by Party ties. He should then appeal confidently to many of them to support him in his opposition to the Bill. Because he believed that in the end national disaster resulted from unjust deeds, and that wrongs committed by a nation did not remain unpunished, he asked the House to reject this scheme, which was contrary to every principle of right and equity.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Monday next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACT (1880) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 134.)

COMMITTEE.

[*Progress 23rd April.*]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Rochester) moved the omission of Sub-section 1.

He said, it appeared to him that after the discussions that took place last Session in both Houses it would not be well that the County Council or any other body should have power to forbid the collection of all eggs. Sub-section (1) dealt with eggs of every species, whilst Sub-section (2) proposed that the power of protection should extend only to particular species. It appeared to him that the promoters of the Bill would gain all they desired by Sub-section (2), and that Sub-section (1) gave unnecessarily large powers.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 14, to leave out Sub-section (1.)—(*Viscount Cranborne.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (1) stand part of the Clause."

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton) said, he thought his noble Friend could not be aware of the origin of the sub-section. When the Bill left the House last year it contained only the proviso for the protection of eggs of different species. It had been found on consultation with various learned bodies that great difficulty in many if not in most cases existed in identifying the eggs of different species. Some authorities went so far as to say that no conscientious ornithologist would be prepared to swear to the identity of any egg unless he had seen the bird lay it. Of course, it was only under very exceptional circumstances indeed that this security would be obtained. The first sub-section was the proviso substituted by the Lords last year for the proviso agreed to by the Commons, and it had now been inserted as an alternative to the original proposal. He was aware that both provisos were subject to the same objection. It would be extremely difficult for any body like the County Council to decide what eggs were capable of identification and what areas should be protected in order to secure the eggs of certain species that vested within those areas. On the whole, it had seemed to those who took an interest in the Bill that the best course was to give Local Authorities the alternative of the two proposals of Sub-section (1) and Sub-section (2).

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE said, the argument of his hon. Friend had not convinced him. It appeared to him to be absurd that any little boy who took a bird's egg within a particular area should be liable to be brought before the Magistrates and fined.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, the proposal made in the clause was a more serious one than it seemed at first sight, inasmuch as it gave power to a Local Authority to make that a crime which was not a crime unless they made it so. He thought that a very serious delegation of authority to make to a County Council or any other local authority.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): As this appears to be contested business I beg to move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

SIR H. MAXWELL said, the proposals of the clause might appear somewhat extreme, but County Councils had been set up and entrusted with responsibility, and if they were not the authority best fitted to judge of the local circumstances he wished to know what they were to be the judge of. He would give a concrete instance of the desirability of having such a clause. There were two islands in Scotland on which the osprey still bred. The osprey was perfectly innocuous except that it preyed upon fish. It surely would not be unreasonable were the County Councils of Ross and Inverness to obtain powers from the Secretary for Scotland to prohibit all egg-taking upon these two small islands, which did not occupy more area than the precincts of the House. He would give another instance. Suppose the County Council of Surrey were actuated by the desire to preserve nightingales upon Wimbledon Common. Would it be unreasonable for the Home Secretary to grant the County Council of Surrey power to prohibit all egg-taking upon

Wimbledon Common in order to protect nightingales?

Motion agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday 30th May.

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.—(No. 27.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Banbury.*)

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): There is no objection, I think, to the Second Reading of this Bill, which is practically the same as that read a second time a day or two ago. There is only a difference as to one clause, and that would be a very proper subject to be dealt with by the Standing Committee.

MR. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, the Building Societies in his district took exception to the Bill, and he must therefore object to the Second Reading.

MR. BANBURY: Under the circumstances, I move that the Order be discharged and the Bill withdrawn. I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. Gladstone) for his statement.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged, and the Bill withdrawn."—(*Mr. Banbury.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.—(No. 150.)

Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 4) BILL.

(No. 140.)

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; to be read the third time To-morrow.

QUARTER SESSIONS BILL [*Lords.*]

(No. 162.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(No. 171.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Statute Law Revision Bills, &c.—That they do propose that the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet in Committee Room B, on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock.

MOTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 6) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the rural sanitary district of Tullamore, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 191.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 7) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the rural sanitary district of Roscrea, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 192.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 8) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Morley, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Local Government Board for Ireland, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," relating to the rural sanitary district of Strabane, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. Morley and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 193.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 6) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Bristol, Heckmondwike, Southampton, Sowerby Bridge, and Stockport, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 194.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 7) BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Foster, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the urban sanitary districts of Bradford (York) and Saint George, and the rural sanitary districts of the Belper Union (two), the Wakefield Union, and the township of Saddleworth, ordered to be brought in by Sir W. Foster and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 195.]

COMMISSIONERS OF WORKS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. Gladstone, Bill to amend "The Commissioners of Works Act, 1852," and for other purposes relating to the Commissioners of Works, ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. Gladstone and Sir J. T. Hibbert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 196.]

LOCAL COURTS OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. M'Cartan, Bill to amend the Law relating to Local Courts of Bankruptcy in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Wolff, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Young, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Flynn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 197.]

EAST INDIA (LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS.)

Return [presented 23rd April] to be printed. [No. 86.]

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

Paper [presented 25th April] to be printed. [No. 87.]

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

Paper [presented 25th April] to be printed. [No. 88.]

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES.

Return [presented 25th April] to be printed. [No. 89.]

AGRICULTURE (ROYAL COMMISSION) (ENGLAND.)

Copy presented,—of Report by Dr. W. Fream (Assistant Commissioner) on the Andover District of Hampshire and the Maidstone District of Kent [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS, 1878 to 1893.

Copy presented,—of further Papers and Correspondence relating to the landing in Great Britain from Canada of Cattle affected with Pleuro-Pneumonia, with Appendices (in continuation of [C. 7123]) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

Copy presented,—of Draft of a Supplemental Charter for the Bank of British North America [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented,—of Treasury Minute, dated 16th April, 1894, declaring that George Beetles, Lineman, Post Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate, through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Return presented,—relative thereto [Address 24th April; Mr. Buchanan]; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Copy ordered, "of Statistical Tables relating to Emigration and Immigration from and into the United Kingdom in the year 1893, and Report to the Board of Trade thereon."—(*Mr. Burt*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 90.]

IRISH CHURCH TEMPORALITIES FUND.

Copy ordered, "of Statement respecting the present financial position of the Irish Church Temporalities Fund."—(*Sir J. T. Hibbert.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 91.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 27th April 1894.

AGRARIAN CRIME IN IRELAND.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

*THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY asked Her Majesty's Government for further information with regard to the murder of James Donovan, at Glenhara, County Cork; whether Her Majesty's Government in any way attributed the murder to the speeches of certain of their Irish supporters denouncing the so-called system of "land-grabbing;" whether in consideration of such speeches and the recent brutal murder, they would not reconsider their avowed policy of repealing the only Act capable of dealing with agrarian crime in Ireland? He said, ~~it~~ was typical of the attitude of the Government with regard to everything connected with Ireland, that when a question of considerable importance affecting that country was raised in their Lordships' House, the only occupant of the Front Bench should be its most recent acquisition (Lord Tweedmouth). The only regard the Government had for Ireland was as to how they could best manage to manipulate Irish votes, and he proposed to address some remarks of a straightforward character to its Members, especially to the noble Lord, whoever he might be, representing the Irish Government in that House, and more especially still to the Prime Minister, who in all matters connected with Ireland up to now had displayed the most marvellous policy of mystery and ambiguity ever yet shown by any Prime Minister with regard to any part of Her Majesty's Dominions. He would therefore say in the noble Earl's absence what he should have said to his face, and leave it to the noble Earl to make his reply in that House or elsewhere. [Earl SPENCER entered the House and was followed by the Earl of ROSEBERY and the Earl of CORK.] He was glad to see the arrival of some Members of the Government. The question of which he had given notice raised three separate points of considerable importance. He said advisedly that the murder in question was an agrarian crime of the most brutal character. It was curious that this agrarian murder should have followed almost immediately on the statement of the Chief Secretary in another place a few days ago, that no agrarian murder had occurred in Ireland since he had been responsible for its administration. The statement of the noble Earl (the Earl of Cork), in reply to his question of Monday, was of a somewhat curious character. The noble Earl seemed to wish their Lordships to imagine that Donovan had been murdered not because he was the caretaker of an evicted farm, but because he had taken part in the seizure of cattle on another estate. He should like the noble Earl to give some reason for that statement, because personally he had no doubt, and anyone who knew Ireland would entertain the same opinion, that the unfortunate man was murdered because he was a caretaker of an evicted farm. The speeches that had been delivered in denunciation of land-grabbers most certainly lent colour to that opinion. In passing, he would explain that "land-grabber" was the term applied to a man who desired to enjoy the rights of property supposed to belong to every British subject. He could only suppose that the sweets of Office had blinded the noble Earl, and that he desired to say and do only what was agreeable to the leading Members of the Government. He could only regret that the noble Earl apparently looked at the matter from a standpoint not far removed from that of his Nationalist allies. He must ask the noble Earl to explain his position, which was incongruous, seeing that he was a Member of a Government who were in power by the votes of men who on every occasion denounced land-grabbing in the most violent terms. At the same time, he was an Irish landlord who was absolutely justified in that assertion of his rights which necessitated the employment of such men as the unfortunate Donovan. No one knew better than the noble Earl (Spencer) that in the past crime had followed speeches of a denunciatory character. If the noble Earl required corroboration of that statement he would see it in the finding of the Judges on the Parnell Commission. During the past few months, in various parts of Ireland, violent speeches had been made and resolutions passed in denunciation of land-grabbing. Speaking at Nenagh, Mr. A. C. O'Connor said—

> "I say that the man who takes a farm from which the tenant has been evicted for non-payment of an impossible or unjust rent is not to be morally distinguished from the receiver of stolen goods. Now, speaking for myself, I mean to say that wherever I meet such a man, be he high or low, rich or poor, I will boycott that man. I will have nothing to do with him; I will treat him, in the words of Parnell, as a 'social leper,' and other people may say what they like about my action."

Similar words were used by Mr. Parnell in a speech delivered on the 20th of September, 1880, at Ennis; and between that date and December, 1880, there were no less than 22 murders and attempts at murder; in 1881 there were 32, and in 1882 there were 64. This showed what the lawless population in Ireland understood by shunning a man as a leper. At the Nenagh meeting Mr. Dillon said—

> "I say it is comparatively easy now to keep an evicted farm empty. You can boycott, you can keep it empty, you can reduce it to the condition which a priest described to me when he said that when a crow flying along sees an evicted farm he turns aside for fear he would fly over it. You can do all that to-day without anybody interfering with you."

The late Prime Minister, in speaking of a former speech of Mr. Dillon's, said—

> "What is boycotting? It is combined intimidation made use of for the purpose of destroying the private liberties of choice by fear of ruin and starvation."

He hoped the noble Earl (Rosebery) was not going to leave the House, for he should have something to say to him directly.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I will return.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: Mr. Gladstone went on to say—

> "The creed of boycotting, like every other creed, requires a sanction, and the sanction of boycotting, that which stands in the rear of boycotting and by which alone boycotting can in the long run be made thoroughly effective, is the murder which cannot be denounced."

Therefore, according to the late Prime Minister, the gentlemen who in their speeches advocated boycotting advocated murder, and, if so, why not the murder of this unhappy caretaker whose life was brutally taken on Saturday last? Mr. Dillon then proceeded to say—

> "After the remarks I have made, you can do all that to-day"

—that was, boycotting evicted farms—

> "without anybody interfering with you. I say that if evicted farms in some parts of Ireland are to be taken to-day that is not the fault of the Government."

That was the most serious statement that had been made among the many speeches of the Nationalist Party. It was one he particularly drew the attention of the Prime Minister to. If Mr. Dillon's statement were correct, the Government were virtually sanctioning the boycotting of evicted farms. They were doing even more—by sanctioning it they were assisting to keep boycotted farms evicted. If it were true, the action of the Government passed any expression he could find to describe it; if it were not true, the Prime Minister should take the first opportunity of contradicting the words of his Nationalist Irish Leader. He knew well that the Prime Minister was singularly reticent with regard to addressing their Lordships on Irish subjects. He had only heard the noble Earl deal with Irish matters in two speeches, both of which were associated with either misfortune or with mystery. The last of these, delivered on the first day of the present Session, was of a very broad character, and he straightway rushed off to Edinburgh and contradicted the statement he made on that occasion. The other speech was when the Home Rule Bill was before their Lordships' House, and that was a speech of the most marvellous character. It exemplified a policy of mystery and ambiguity, interlarded with a series of jests which struck him as being of a ponderous and rather Joe Miller-like character. There were two lines of Pope which aptly described it—

> "Such laboured nothings, in so strange a style,
> Amuse the unlearned, and make the learned smile."

It might be that mystery and ambiguity were favourite characteristics of the noble Earl. In all probability no one cared if he cultivated those characteristics as Lord Rosebery, but in the Prime Minister of England with regard to the policy of himself and his followers mystery could not for one moment be tolerated. He would ask the noble Earl whether he as Prime Minister was as unenthusiastic with regard to the safety and welfare of Her Majesty's subjects in Ireland as he had stated he was with regard to Home Rule? Passing to the third part of his question, he maintained that, in view of such speeches and the recent brutal murder, the Government ought to reconsider their avowed policy of repealing the Crimes Act. He challenged noble Lords opposite to say that any law-abiding person suffered under the administration of that Act. The noble Earl opposite (Earl Spencer), who had had considerable experience in the administration of such Acts, knew that crime in Ireland rose and fell with almost barometer-like accuracy, when a Crimes Act was in force and when it was not; and he maintained that, owing to the relaxing of important clauses relating to secret inquiry and the change of venue, crime of an agrarian character had increased. The relaxing the power to change the venue was at this moment holding out hopes to every law-breaker in the country, while there was not the slightest chance of an ordinary jury in Cork convicting the murderers of Donovan, however clearly his guilt might be brought home to them. The Government, therefore, should give some good reason for their action in dropping an Act which hurt nobody but law-breakers. The reason, he supposed, would be that when Mr. Morley succeeded to the Irish Office Ireland was in a satisfactory condition as regards law and order, except in a certain part. This was entirely due to the administration of the Crimes Act by Mr. Balfour, assisted by one of the most brilliant Law Officers that any Government had possessed. Mr. Morley also was fortunate in the fact that while under the Unionist Government the Irish Leaders did the utmost to render the government of Ireland under the ordinary law impossible, now they were, for Party and political purposes, zealously endeavouring to make the administration of the law as easy as possible. But Mr. Morley had a further advantage. He was faced by a loyal Opposition, who sought to place no obstacle in his way. How different was the action of Mr. Morley and his friends when Mr. Balfour was responsible for the Government of Ireland! They did their best to hamper the administration of the law in every possible way.

EARL SPENCER: No.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY asked them how did noble Lords account for Mr. Shaw-Lefevre parading the Plan of Campaign estates, making wild promises which he had no idea of redeeming? He would ask the noble Earl who shook his head.

EARL SPENCER: I was not aware that I shook my head.

*THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY said, then the noble Earl allowed that his Party did their best to hamper Mr. Balfour in his administration. He was very glad to have got that from him. He urged that the Crimes Act should not be repealed, because he looked forward to the future of Ireland. Noble Lords opposite and their colleagues in the House of Commons seemed to have no idea as to what was to be the future of Ireland. They were content to submit measures solely to conciliate their followers in the House of Commons—measures which, so far as he could gather, would benefit no one but those who had broken the law in Ireland. He looked forward to the time when a Unionist Government would be returned to power, and he trusted that instead of trying to conciliate law-breakers they would endeavour to promote the prosperity of Ireland. But how could that policy be carried out if, on account of the action of the present Government, three months had to be spent in re-enacting the Crimes Act? That the re-enactment of the Crimes Act would be necessary was proved by Mr. Dillon's own statement that "if the Unionist Party returned to power there would be the biggest land agitation in Ireland that had ever been known." He was not in the confidence of the Unionist Leaders with regard to their future policy; but he thought he was able, by reason of the official position which he had held, of his practical experience as an Irish landlord, and of the many friends he had in all parts of Ireland, to give as good an opinion as anybody in Her Majesty's dominions with regard to the present and future position of Ireland. He had ventured to put forward a policy which he would certainly urge upon the noble Marquess when he next came into power. That policy could not be propounded by the noble Earl opposite, because he was too much fettered by pledges made to those who cared nothing for the future of

Ireland. A great stride towards the settlement of the Irish Question would be made if the Land Question could be settled on terms agreeable to landlords and tenants, and with no appreciable risk to the State. Again, much might be done by the establishment of a Board of Agriculture to develop the natural resources of the country. But what was the use of such a policy if the only power to deal with agitation were to be repealed? He appealed to noble Lords opposite to put aside Party feeling and to look at the question from a larger point of view. He was convinced that by the policy he had indicated, which had received the approval of all classes and sections of the people, Ireland would be made happy, contented, and prosperous, and be no longer the shuttlecock of various conflicting political Parties who seemed only anxious to obtain votes in Parliament. Ireland, if such a policy was carried out, would become one of the brightest gems in the British diadem, and when that day arrived a Ministry under the noble Marquess—having propounded such a policy supported by all classes in the country—the noble Marquess would leave behind him a name as the statesman who, having

> "Scattered plenty o'er a smiling land,"

had made it possible, happily, to

> "Read their history in a nation's eyes."

*Lord MONKSWELL said, he was glad to find from the eloquent peroration of the noble Marquess that his object was to promote cordial relationship between this country and Ireland. He would hardly have gathered so much from the opening and subsequent portions of his speech, because those remarks appeared to be conceived in a spirit that must cause bitter exasperation between the two countries. He would not follow the noble Marquess with regard to the question whether this murder was of an agrarian character or not; he was perfectly willing to concede that it was possibly a brutal agrarian outrage. Nor did he propose to take any notice of the suggestion that the speech of the Chief Secretary had something to do with the outrage.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY: I did not say anything of the sort. I said it followed very closely on that speech.

*Lord MONKSWELL said, then he did not know why the noble Marquess should have made the observation. He should not have made it unless he meant to insinuate that the speech had something to do with the murder. The noble Marquess was very eloquent on the subject of boycotting. But he answered himself in his own speech, for he had shown that boycotting had gone on diminishing until at the present moment there was no case of total boycotting, and only one case of partial boycotting in Ireland. The noble Marquess was not correct in his statistics, for when the late Government left Office there was one case of partial boycotting affecting seven persons, while now there was only one case of partial boycotting affecting one person. With regard to the first question put by the noble Marquess, the Government were not in a position to give any police information in their possession in regard to the murder of Donovan, for the very simple reason that it might defeat the ends of justice if they were to do so. But he would mention one fact that was very significant. That murder, on the Sunday after it was committed, was denounced from all the neighbouring altars and was received with every mark of public indignation. With regard to the second question, the Government did not attribute the murder to the speeches of any of their supporters or to the speeches of anybody, whether their supporters or not. They had information from the highest authorities in the district, whose opinion they had asked, to the effect that in their view this murder had nothing to do with any inflammatory speeches whatever. Then the noble Marquess asked the Government to reconsider their avowed policy in the light of the speeches to which he had referred and of this murder. That seemed to be a rather slender basis on which to suggest that the Government should reverse their policy in an exceedingly important particular. Experience had shown that the policy of conciliation towards Ireland and of doing without the provisions of a Crimes Act had been successful. The noble Marquess had not condescended to come to close quarters. He said he would not quote statistics; and the reason was obvious—they would have told against him.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY said, that all he desired to point out was that the present Government enjoyed greater advantages in governing Ireland than were possessed by their predecessors under the noble Marquess.

*LORD MONKSWELL said, that was so. He was ready to admit that the present Government enjoyed advantages in governing Ireland which the Government under the noble Marquess did not enjoy, and the reason was because the policy of the present Administration was to govern Ireland with the goodwill of the people, whereas the policy of the preceding Government was to govern the country against the will of the people. Statistics affecting the whole of Ireland and also the disturbed districts proved that under the present Administration crimes had been fewer and less serious. It was only respectful to Lord Londonderry to give the statistics which led them to believe that their policy would be successful in the future. From the Winter Assizes, 1890, to the Spring Assizes, 1892, in the whole of Ireland the indictable offences, as compared with those from the Winter Assizes, 1892, to the Spring Assizes, 1894, were rather more numerous—that was to say, that the number of indictable offences throughout the whole of Ireland had fallen under the administration of the present Government. With regard to the particular class of offences dealt with specially under the Crimes Act, a greater number of offenders had been brought to justice, and a larger percentage had been convicted than during any similar period under the late Government without the aid of the Crimes Act. The Judges, moreover, had laid considerable stress recently on the creditable manner in which the juries in Ireland had acted. Public opinion was on the side of the Government, and this unquestionably was a much more efficient means of checking crime and outrage and of bringing criminals to justice than secret inquiries. The figures he had given referred to the whole of Ireland, but in the disturbed districts it was exactly the same. County Clare was quieter than it had been since 1886. In the disturbed districts of Kerry, in the 20 months since the present Government came into Office, there had only been 147 outrages as against 235 previously. In the disturbed area of County Cork, for the first quarter of 1892, there were 18 outrages. They fell to 10 in the first quarter of 1893. That had been effected not by calling in aid the provisions of the Crimes Act, but simply by constant care, vigorous patrolling and watchfulness on the part of the police, with the advantage, of course, of having the goodwill of the people on the side of the Government. Of the 31 secret inquiries held under the Crimes Act of 1887 only 11 convictions resulted. Secret inquiries had been held under the Explosives Act of 1883, but in not a single case was sufficient evidence procured to warrant a trial. It was an achievement which the Government regarded with great pride, that they should have succeeded at last in bringing the people of Ireland over to their side. It had been said by the noble Marquess that nobody would be the worse for keeping the Crimes Act on the Statute Book. But that argument would take them a very long way, for surely in that case it was just possible that they might want a Crimes Act for some other part of the United Kingdom. It did not seem to him that Ireland should be treated in a different way from the rest of the United Kingdom, especially when statistics for the last 20 months showed that crime was steadily decreasing. It was not desirable, therefore, in justice and in prudence, that the provisions of the Crimes Act should be kept, or put, in force. In such circumstances it would be an exceedingly strong and unwise course to take, and it was entirely opposed to the spirit of the Union that laws should be kept on the Statute Book affecting only one portion of the United Kingdom and depriving persons in Ireland of the right of trial by jury, in respect of certain offences, at the mere will and pleasure of the Lord Lieutenant. The great object of the Government was to make the Irish people respect the administration of the law. Having that object in view, it appeared to him that it would be monstrous on the part of the Government to accede to the invitation of the noble Marquess, and to reverse the whole spirit and policy that had already produced such satisfactory and beneficial results, simply because of the commission of one crime which had been strongly condemned by public opinion in the neighbourhood. In conclusion, he would merely say that he hoped when the noble Marquess again asked the Government to reverse the whole tenour of their policy, he would base such a very large demand on grounds less inadequate than those he advanced in support of his argument on this occasion.

THE EARL OF CORK said, he very much regretted the interpretation which the noble Marquess had apparently put upon the remarks he had made in that House the other evening with reference to the crime in question. It was true he had said that, so far as his information went, the crime was not solely attributable to the fact that the victim was in charge of an evicted farm, but he had added that this was not in any way a palliation of the deed. The noble Marquess would no doubt admit, on further consideration, that he was hardly justified in speaking as he had spoken. He could assure the noble Marquess that, however great his love for Ireland might be, he would in no way yield to him in that respect. They might differ as to the best means of maintaining peaceful relations between the two countries. All he could say was that he very much doubted whether such speeches as that which had been delivered that afternoon by the noble Marquess were calculated to promote good feeling. He had it on the best authority that the priests in the district had done their best to put down crime of every kind; and on this occasion there was not an altar in the district from which the crime was not denounced. When public opinion was strongly against the commission of crime, convictions were far more likely to be obtained. From what he had heard, he was convinced that should the perpetrators be brought to trial, justice would be meted out to them in a manner such as they rightly deserved.

*LORD ASHBOURNE said, the noble Earl who had just spoken could hardly have attended very closely to or appreciated very accurately what had been said by the noble Marquess in his allusions to the recent deplorable murder, for they all knew how such a crime would be viewed by the noble Earl, and his earnest and deep desire that in the district with which he was specially connected, law and order should prevail, and when violated should be thoroughly vindicated. He assumed also that that was the desire of the Government, and that they would make every effort with the powers at their disposal to detect the crime and bring the authors to justice. The noble Lord opposite had referred to the quiet which, he said, existed at present in Ireland, but that was a matter to be regarded from separate points of view. Everyone, of course, was glad of the quiet that now existed in the greater part of Ireland, and of the peace and prosperity which prevailed in so many districts of the country. But there might well be a divergence of opinion respecting the reasons for the existing peace and quiet. One reason was the satisfactory harvest last year, and another the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, which had unsettled men's minds, and was regarded as pregnant with danger. A third reason was the support which the present Government received from those who, when the noble Marquess near him was Prime Minister, did not apply themselves in the same strenuous way to enforcing the duty and necessity of preserving law and order. When they were considering the figures given on behalf of the Government as to the diminution of crime, it would be interesting to know how boycotting was regarded by the present Government. Everyone knew that boycotting was a cruel and brutal form of crime, based on intimidation and appealing to all the worst and lowest passions of humanity, as displayed against persons who were unpopular owing to local circumstances. Yet not very long ago Mr. Dillon appeared to indicate, in the speech to which reference had been made, that in his belief the Government would not interfere with boycotting, and would not prosecute in such cases. It was a very serious thing that suggestions of that kind should be circulated in a country inhabited by a very intelligent and quick-witted people, who understood the meaning of words as well as any of Her Majesty's subjects in any part of the world. He hoped they would be told by the Government that boycotting would continue to be regarded as a violation of the law which must be suppressed relentlessly. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Monkswell) said that part of the programme and policy of the Government was the repeal of the Crimes Act. But no one would have thought that two weeks ago. The Government had been in power now for something over 20 months, and no hint of it had been heard before. If it was part of their policy, why was not this intention mentioned in the Queen's Speech? It was difficult to understand how the repeal of this Act could have been regarded by the Government as a cardinal part of their policy, seeing that no Minister had ever suggested anything of the kind until the recent Wednesday when a repealing Bill was introduced by a private Member, and adopted by Mr. Morley. There was no justification for the repeal of the Crimes Act. It having, on many occasions, been found necessary to enact special measures for the repression of crime, it was, a few years ago, at last deemed wise to put into one compendious Code the most moderate of the provisions which had been embodied in previous Acts passed by Mr. Gladstone's Governments, and it was arranged that these provisions should lie dormant when there was no necessity for their application, and only to be called into existence when they were required. Well, when the noble Marquess (Lord Salisbury) left Office there were only four men in prison under this Crimes Act, and the only clauses to which exception had ever been taken were allowed to remain dormant. He would not weary their Lordships by wading through the crowds of statistics given the other day in the House of Commons to prove the utility and mercy of passing such an Act. When the late Government passed the Crimes Act there were 4,900 persons wholly or partially boycotted; but when the late Government left Office, after the Act had been in force for some four or five years, there was only one family boycotted in the whole of Ireland. Even if no other result had been achieved, would not that alone constitute an ample justification for keeping this measure on the Statute Book, to be called into existence when required to put down and stifle such an appalling state of facts? Nothing was said by the noble Lord opposite about laying aside the great powers which should exist in every Constitution of having a ready and easy means of obtaining changes of venue and independent juries. The necessity for such an Act had been overwhelmingly proved. The Government said that if this Act were repealed and an occasion arose for repressive measures Parliament could again be asked to pass a special Bill. In that suggestion great danger lurked. The Government were apparently prepared to wait for an outburst of lawlessness, boycotting and outrage, and then to spend months in coming to Parliament to obtain fresh powers with which to cope with the evil. Surely it could not be right to run into such danger merely in order to remove from the Statute Book an Act which did not do any human being an atom of harm, or bring peril to any honest man—under which no law-abiding person could be arrested, and which was potent for good, and might be necessary at any time for the proper administration of the law—that that was to be done in face of the obvious and serious risks he had indicated. Was it so very certain that the existence of that Act on the Statute Book did no good? Was it so very certain that the admonitions which were given to the people to abstain from crime and outrage, that the sermons which might be preached urging the people to remain quiet and enforcing the duty of obedience to the laws of God and man, did not owe most of their influence to the fact that it was known that if they were not attended to this Act could be called into operation at once for the purpose of grappling with crime? The subject of boycotting was not one to be put aside with light and hopeful phrases. It was an appalling thing to the neighbourhood cursed by it—a wicked and cruel thing to those against whom it was directed—its appalling cruelty could not be overstated—and yet they were asked to assent in the light and hopeful way in which it had been spoken of to the repeal of the only measure which had proved equal to cope with the present state of many parts of Ireland. The Evicted Tenants' Bill was not yet before their Lordships, and he was not going to discuss it; but one of the points of difficulty under it was the position of the existing tenants (called "planters") of evicted farms, who would have to give way to old tenants if they did not take the responsibility of saying "no." Those who knew Ireland would know well what a tremendous suggestion was there made to apply terrorism and intimidation to the existing tenants. It was a serious danger to remove from the Statute Book an Act which might be ask whether there were not vacant spaces for the exhibition of these hangings in the cross gallery in the Exhibition building on the other side of the road? He considered it unfortunate that such great alterations should have been made while the Museum was confessedly in an imperfect state. Whatever alterations were made, there could be no doubt that eventually the buildings at South Kensington would have to be added to. Indeed, he believed that there had already been a competition in respect of the plans for new buildings; therefore it seemed to him regrettable that internal alterations should be made pending the conclusion of these structural arrangements.

*LORD PLAYFAIR said, that the difficulties which had been shown to exist in regard to the arrangement of casts arose from the inadequacy of the accommodation in the Museum for its splendid collections, and there was no doubt a strong desire that the great treasures which South Kensington Museum possessed should be adequately seen by the public. With regard to the collection of tapestry, there was probably no collection in Europe, save that of Spain, equal to the collection at South Kensington. On account of deficient accommodation this collection was exhibited against a wall in the present sculpture gallery with the light shining upon the glass which enclosed the tapestry. The reflection of the windows in the glass which enclosed the collection made it almost impossible for the tapestry to be seen at all; and the artists of this country, who were proud of this great collection, were anxious that something should be done to enable the tapestry to be properly displayed. And more than the artists: there was no class of the industrial community who used the Museum so much for industrial purposes as manufacturers of textile fabrics, and their great desire was that these tapestries should be seen to the best advantage. Well, the court in which the sculpture was formerly exhibited was admirably lighted for showing these tapestries in a most effective manner. They had now a skilled artist who was Director of the Museum, and under his advice and belief that he could exhibit the tapestries in a manner worthy of the nation, and could exhibit the casts —which, after all, although important, were only reproductions, whilst the tapestries were originals—better than they had been exhibited hitherto, the change was made. The nation owed a great deal to Mr. Perry, who, at much inconvenience to himself, had travelled through Europe to make this admirable collection of casts. No doubt the last wish on the part of the authorities at South Kensington would have been to slight Mr. Perry in any way with regard to the collection. But they were under a misapprehension. Mr. Perry did visit the Museum when the changes were being made. It now appears that he thought the arrangements in the Sculpture Gallery were only on account of an overflow. Clearly, there was a mistake on the part of the authorities or on that of Mr. Perry, for Mr. Perry left the impression on the mind of the authorities that he was in favour of the change. He (Lord Playfair) had a number of letters from artists approving of the change both as being good for the tapestries and being good for the casts. He had letters from Mr. Morris, Sir Burne-Jones, Mr. Richmond, and Mr. Penrose, all of whom thought the casts were much better placed than they were before, and that the tapestries were admirably seen, and that these treasures had now really become available to the public, hitherto having been concealed. He would only read the letter received from Mr. Richmond, who was a very competent authority with regard to the result. He said—

> "I am glad that you have brought out of darkness into light these glorious Flemish tapestries, which have hitherto been practically useless to the student. The casts in the large gallery look extremely well, far better, to my thinking, than in the restricted light in which they were. There is a dignity in their arrangement which every true artist will allow."

Having obtained this view from artists it was not intended, at present, at all events, to make any change. If it were found that the sculpture could not be properly seen by the students some other accommodation would have to be provided. At present, however, the authorities desired to ascertain fairly the result of the change. Lord Cowper must have gone on a very dark day to see these objects of art. He (Lord Playfair) had gone to see them three days ago, when the light was good, and had found there some students copying from the casts. He spoke to the students, who did not know who he was or what was his motive in questioning them. He asked them, "Do you like copying in this gallery or did you prefer working in the court from which the casts have come." The answer he received was that in the old court there were other statues in the line of vision behind those that were being copied, the result being that a statue would appear with four arms and three or four legs." Under the new plan," they said, "we find it far more easy to copy than formerly." No doubt the conditions under which the casts were seen would materially affect the impressions of the visitor. When he visited the place the light was good, and he could see everything very clearly. With regard to the painting, some of the casts had become dirty and had been cleaned, and two or three had been flatted, to see whether that would suit the copiers; but that was only an experiment. As to removing them to another place, he hoped the Government some day would undertake to provide further exhibition room to the art treasures of South Kensington. Those treasures were splendid and an honour to the nation, but they were so crowded that a great part of them were not exhibited properly. He could assure the noble Lord that the highest value was attached to the collection of casts, and that if its present position was not suitable to the students the authorities would take means to get some other place where they would be satisfied that the conditions were satisfactory.

*Viscount CRANBROOK said, he did not wish to enter into the dispute between the artists who might hold different views as to the place in which these casts should be exhibited, but he wished to call attention to a point made by the noble Lord (Lord Playfair) opposite as to the want of accommodation at South Kensington for the splendid collections there. No one could see that collection and see the people who resorted to it without wishing that it could be shown to greater advantage than it was. He had heard of an American gentleman driving up to the "Brompton Boilers," as the place was often called; and when he was told that that was the great South Kensington Museum which he had heard so much of as containing the finest collection of art works in the world, he could not believe that it could be in such a place, and drove away again. He (Viscount Cranbrook) would, therefore, ask the noble Earl at the head of the Government to use his influence as the head of the Government in this matter, and to say that a commencement should be made, as soon as money could be got from the Treasury, with the buildings for the designs of which money was voted two years ago.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: On that point I think it is a little hard that a Government who are living in lean years should be asked to carry out this much-needed improvement when the Government of which the noble Lord was a distinguished Member had six comparatively fat years in which they did nothing at all.

The Earl of CRANBROOK: I would remind the noble Earl that the late Government had a competition of designs and took a Vote of money for the first year's operations.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: I think we could have found money for the designs. The matter will receive attention.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 2) BILL.

Read 2^a (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.—(No. 27.)

House in Committee (according to Order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^a on Monday next.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Ordered, That the Evening Sitting of the House on Tuesday next, and on all subsequent Tuesdays during the present Session, do commence at half-past Five o'clock, unless the House shall otherwise order.

LAW LIBRARY FOUR COURTS, IRELAND, BILL.—(No. 29.)

Read 3^a (according to Order), and passed.

MARKING OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE.

The Lord Vernon exempted from attendance on the Select Committee, and the Lord De L'Isle and Dudley added to the Select Committee.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS (BETTERMENT).

The Earl Cowper and the Lord Egerton added to the Select Committee.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS AND CONSOLIDATION BILLS.

Message from the Commons, That they have ordered that the Select Committee appointed by them to join with a Committee of their Lordships on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet the Committee appointed by their Lordships in Committee Room B on Monday next, at Twelve o'clock, as desired by their Lordships.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 27th April 1894.

The House met at Two of the clock.

NEW WRIT ISSUED.

For the Borough of Hackney (Southern Division), *v.* Sir Charles Russell, G.C.M.G., Manor of Northstead.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

QUESTIONS.

GRESHAM UNIVERSITY COMMISSION.

MR. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that the Report of the Gresham University Commission was published more than a month ago, he will accelerate the publication of the evidence?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I am informed by the Secretary to the Commission that the work has been exceedingly heavy, the Commission having held some 115 protracted sittings, and there being some 1,227 double-columned pages of evidence to be passed through the Press and indexed, besides an Appendix. The printers have already set up the Evidence and Index, but not the Appendix. I hope, however, that no unnecessary delay will occur in finishing the work.

COST OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

MR. BENN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state the total amount expended in respect of the Royal Commission on Labour up to the 31st of March last, and the approximate further expenditure which will be incurred?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The total expenditure up to March 31, 1894, is £45,358, and the estimated further expenditure is £1,530. These figures are exclusive of the rent of the premises used, which belong to the Government.

DOG MUZZLING REGULATIONS AT KANTURK.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a considerable number of shopkeepers in Kanturk have recently been summoned to Petty Sessions and fined for having their dogs without log or muzzle; was any public notice put up warning the public that such was contrary to law; and, if not, why was not the customary practice followed in this case; and is he aware that a certain subconstable's dog was at large without log or muzzle; and, if so, why were the same proceedings not instituted against the policeman as against the civilians?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed that the fact is as stated in the first paragraph, and that so late as September last Orders were made by the Local Authority (the Board of Guardians) to the effect mentioned in the question. These Orders were posted in the usual way throughout the district. It appears to be the fact that the local sergeant of police has a dog, but the animal, I am told, is constantly muzzled and tied up.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to certain proceedings before the Kanturk Petty Sessions on the 21st instant, when a trader in the town, named Callaghan M'Carthy, was summoned for having a greyhound at large without a muzzle, and fined 10s. and costs, notwithstanding that Dr. Webb informed the police and the Magistrates that the dog belonged to him; is he aware that the Magistrates refused to increase the fine to such an amount as would give Mr. M'Carthy the right of appeal; and will the attention of the Lord Chancellor be called to the action of the Magistrates in thus summarily deciding a case?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are accurately stated in the question, though I am informed that Dr. Webb was unable to tell the Magistrate when he got possession of the dog, and that M'Carthy did not appear in Court until the Magistrates were about rising, when his application could not, of course, be acceded to.

BOARD OF WORKS LOANS IN IRELAND.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Patrick Murnane, of Coolboy, who applied, in December last, to the Board of Public Works for a loan (under the Land Law (Ireland) Acts), and received an answer that the work for which he desired to borrow should be gradually done by himself and his sons without the aid of the loan; whether he is aware that Patrick Murnane had paid his rent up to the customary period on the estate, as required by the Board of Works; and whether the Treasury have advised the Board of Works to refuse loans to tenant farmers in Ireland who are competent to do works of improvement on their holdings; and if so, when this new rule came into operation?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I have received information as to the circumstances of the case referred to. No general instructions have been issued. Each case is dealt with on its merits; but the Treasury is in full accord with the principle that where a tenant or tenant-purchaser can reasonably be expected to carry out an improvement by the labour of himself and his family, it is not desirable that he should be encouraged to burden his holding with a rent charge for a loan extending over at least 22 years.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE ROSCREA UNION.

MR. CREAN (Queen's Co., Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a majority of the elected Guardians of the Roscrea Union, in the Queen's County, have petitioned the Local Government Board for Ireland to put the compulsory clauses of the Labourers (Ireland) Act into force, and to instruct their Inspector, when holding the local inquiry into the third scheme, to include all representations for cottages which were rejected by the majority vote of the *ex officio* Guardians on the 15th of March and the 5th of April, 1894; and whether the Local Government Board for Ireland will meet the wishes of the elected Guardians and cause the inquiry to include the rejected representations?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Petition referred to in this question was received by the Local Government Board on the 14th inst., and petitioners were informed that under Section 4 of the Labourers Act of 1891 an application for an inquiry into the action of the Guardians in such cases should emanate from the persons who signed the representations. The consideration of the question raised in the concluding paragraph of this notice must, therefore, await the receipt of such an application.

THE LEWIS ESTATES, GALWAY.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the number and cost of extra police in the County of Galway in connection with the Lewis estate since 1885; and if he will state the amount paid to Mrs. Lewis during that period for rent of barracks, provisions to police, forage for horses, &c?

MR. J. MORLEY: The number of extra police employed on this estate since 1885 has varied from three to nine, and the total cost of the men is estimated to have been about £3,660. The lady referred to is the owner of one of the permanent barracks of the county, which has been held from her on lease since 1873. But, beyond this, the answer to the second paragraph is "nil."

MR. ROCHE: Are we to understand from the right hon. Gentleman that none of the Lewis family derive any benefit or receive compensation for the other houses occupied by the police, or for forage supplied to the horses?

MR. J. MORLEY: My information is definite that, so far as forage goes, they receive no payment whatever. The only payment they do receive is under a lease made in the year 1873. If my hon. Friend wishes, I will make further inquiry.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): Is it not usual to pay rent in all these cases?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes.

Mr. BODKIN (Roscommon, S.): Is not the amount charged for extra police more than the fee farm value?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): Will it be possible before the Second Reading of the Evicted Tenants Bill to lay on the Table an estimate of the cost to the taxpayer for extra police on the several estates the cases of which were inquired into by the Mathew Commission?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have not in my possession a full account of all the heads of expenditure, but I will consider what information can be supplied. I do not see why it should not be communicated to the House.

Mr. ROCHE: As I believe the Lewis family are paid for the rent of the house in which the police reside, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman to make further inquiries.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am told that no payment is made, except that provided for in the lease of 1873.

ST. SILAS' SCHOOLS, HUNSLET.

Mr. JACKSON (Leeds, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what is the cause of the delay in payment of the grant due to St. Silas' Schools, Hunslet, Leeds; and if he can say when the payment will be made.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): The delay in payment of the grant has arisen from the managers having entered in the account of income and expenditure certain sums spent on the improvement of the school premises, not being ordinary repairs. Article 90 of the Code does not allow the income of a school to be applied to any outlay on the school premises, beyond the cost of ordinary repairs; and if the Department were to make a grant in aid of the improvement of school premises, they would violate the provisions of Section 96 of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. The managers have been asked to withdraw these sums from the account, and have declined to do so. If, however, without withdrawing the sums from the account, they will state the amount that has been expended on the items specified in the correspondence, I will direct that the grant shall be paid; but, of course, without reckoning the sums I have mentioned as income, for the purpose of increasing the grant beyond the 17s. 6d. limit.

Mr. JACKSON: Then how does the matter stand? If the managers do not furnish the items, will the school have to go without the grant?

Mr. ACLAND: The Education Department cannot break the law, which provides that they shall not allow the income of the school to be applied to school building improvements beyond ordinary repairs. If we know these items do not come within the category of ordinary repairs we shall be making a grant in excess of what the law directs.

Mr. JACKSON: Then we must get the items distinct?

Mr. ACLAND: Yes, we cannot break the law.

MADDEN ESTATE, CO. FERMANAGH.

Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that 103 tenants are under notice of eviction on the Madden (Roslea) estate, County Fermanagh, which is held by Mr. Madden from Trinity College, Dublin, under a renewable lease, on which the College has gradually increased the head rent from £800 in 1805 to £2,263 in 1856, this increase being made chiefly upon the improvements executed on the lands by Mr. Madden, who has practically ceased to have any interest in the property and his tenants; whether the Royal Irish Constabulary have specially reported upon the condition of these tenants, and their inability to meet the present demands against them; and whether, under the circumstances, he will place himself in communication with the Board of Trinity College, with the view of effecting some settlement and preventing some 150 families of tenants and sub-tenants being dispossessed from their holdings?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is a fact that 103 tenants are under notice of eviction on this estate; but the proceedings, though in the name of the middle landlord, Mr. Madden, have, I believe, been really taken by a Receiver on the estate on behalf of Trinity College. I have no information as to the amount of the head-rent in 1805. There seems to be no doubt, however, that it has been largely increased from time to time, and that such increases have been accompanied by corresponding increases in the rentals paid by the tenants. The condition of the property has formed the subject of special Reports both to the present Government and that of my predecessor; and from the information brought to my notice, I believe that most of the tenants now under notice of eviction are poor—many of them hopelessly so—and that, moreover, the immediate landlord is himself very little better off. Regarding the last paragraph, it is undoubtedly most desirable in the general interests that settlements should be arrived at between the tenants and the landlord, but I am not sure that any mediation on the part of the Government to secure so deserving an object would be attended with good results. I would, however, suggest that the hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite are likely to have more influence with the Board of Trinity College than I should have.

INCITEMENT TO BOYCOTTING AT PEAKE, CO. CORK.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that a meeting was held on Sunday, the 15th instant, at Peake village, County Cork for the purpose of denouncing a person who had taken a vacant farm, and that a strong resolution was passed inciting the people in the district to boycott such person; were any arrests made by the police; and does the Irish Government purpose taking steps to put a stop to such practice?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is a fact, I am informed, that a meeting was held on the date and at the place mentioned, but the information which I have received from the police does not bear out the allegation in the question that a strong resolution inciting to boycotting was passed at the meeting. On the contrary, the Police Report states that the speeches were short and moderate; that the meeting was a great failure, and that it will have no effect whatever. No arrests were made, for the reason that the necessity for such did not arise.

Mr MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): Was a resolution passed as suggested in the question?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The newspaper report speaks of a resolution having been passed condemnatory of land-grabbing.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Have the police forwarded the terms of the resolution?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No.

LORD ANNALY'S ESTATE IN COUNTY LONGFORD.

Mr. DANE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that Lord Annaly's estate in the County Longford is now, and has been for some time, under the control of the Land Judge of the High Court of Justice in Ireland; can he state how many lettings have been made by him from time to time of evicted farms to new tenants; how many old tenants have been committed for contempt of Court in retaking forcible possession of farms; and whether any of them have been discharged from prison upon giving undertakings not to again violate the law; in how many cases have these undertakings been broken, and thereupon the tenants so breaking them been recommitted to prison; and is the Land Judge at the present time in treaty with the tenants on this estate for the sale to them of their holdings under the Land Purchase Acts?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that an order for the sale of these estates was made in March, 1886, and that an order appointing a Receiver was made in October, 1888. Tenants have surrendered or been evicted from their holdings in about 20 cases, in most of which relettings were made to relations of the old tenants. In three or four cases relettings have been made to other tenants on the estate, who are still in occupation. Three evicted tenants, and the wife of one of them, have been committed for contempt in retaking forcible possession; one of such tenants and his wife were discharged in promising not again to violate the law. The said tenant and his wife, after their release, again took forcible possession, and an order for their recommittal was again made, but the tenant evaded arrest by leaving the country, and his wife alone again was committed. The Land Judge has, by an order, authorised the solicitor having carriage to negotiate a sale with the tenants, and such negotiations are still pending.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman direct careful inquiry to be made into all the circumstances?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have had full inquiry made.

TRAINING COLLEGES.

Mr. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware that so long as the existing accommodation at Training Colleges is insufficient to meet the demand caused by the operation of Article 115 (a) of the Education Code, and so long as the authorities of Training Colleges are free to select students for other reasons than success in order of merit at the Queen's Scholardship Examinations, serious professional disabilities are by the operation of Article 73 of the Education Code placed upon many teachers who as Queen's scholars were entitled to obtain entrance at a Training College, and that managers of schools often regard these teachers as belonging to an inferior class unworthy of promotion or the higher scale of pay; and further, if he will undertake that a Minute of the Education Department shall remedy these grievances as far as at present practicable by removing the technical distinction made in Article 73 of the Education Code between the staff equivalents of certificated teachers trained at a Training College and certificated teachers not so trained?

Mr. ACLAND: There are still some vacant places in the day Training Colleges. The Article referred to by the hon. Member relates in its terms to assistant certificated teachers only, and not to head teachers in charge of schools, who count for the same number of scholars, whether they are trained in Training Colleges or not. I cannot prevent managers of schools from preferring a head teacher trained in a Training College to one who has not been so trained; and, if such a preference is unjustifiable, it would be difficult to justify the large expenditure of the State upon Training Colleges. But I quite admit that when a teacher has done good work his record should be considered, whether he has been trained in a Training College or not, and if conclusive evidence is placed before me showing that teachers of proved excellence have been rejected for inferior teachers simply on account of the slight difference applied to assistant certificated teachers in Article 73, I shall be happy to consider the matter.

WRITS OF SUMMONSES.

Mr. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there are 83 District Registries for the issue of writs of summons in England, and only one in Ireland; and whether, considering the serious losses caused to merchants and traders in Belfast and adjoining districts by the delay involved in having at present to send to Dublin for writs of summons, he will communicate with the Lord Chancellor of Ireland as to the advisability of establishing in Belfast an office for the issue of writs of summons?

Mr. J. MORLEY: District Registries in England are the creation of Statute, and there is no similar legislation applicable to Ireland. The Lord Chancellor has, therefore, no authority to act as suggested in the question of my hon. Friend.

IRISH CHURCH TEMPORALITIES COMMISSION.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any change has been made by the Irish Land Commissioners in fixing the dates for payment of the half-yearly instalments payable by the tenant purchasers under the Irish Church Temporalities Commission; whether the dates for payment have in former years been extended from 1st January and 1st July to 31st March and 30th September respectively; and whether, in view of the great depression in the prices of agricultural produce, the Land Commissioners will extend the time for repayment to the dates above mentioned?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No change has been made by the Irish Land Commissioners in fixing the date for payment of half-yearly instalments payable by tenant-purchasers under the Irish Church Acts. The gale days upon which the instalments are made payable by the mortgagees are 1st January and 1st July in some cases, and 1st April and 1st October in others. When the July instalments become due, following the practice of the Church Commissioners, the purchasers are sent orders to pay the half-yearly gale on or before the 30th September. The limit in respect of the instalments which become due upon the 1st January is the 15th March.

PIERS IN IRELAND.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state what is the amount of the annual grant made to the Scotch Fishery Commissioners for the construction of piers in Scotland; and why a similar grant is not made to the Irish Fishery Commissioners for a similar purpose?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT (who replied) said: The £3,000 voted annually to the Fishery Board for Scotland for grants in aid of piers or quays is voted under the Act 5 Geo. IV., c. 64, and there is no similar provision in force with regard to Ireland.

KILLAVULLEN NATIONAL SCHOOL.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has fully considered the case of Mr. Nicholas Fitzgerald, assistant teacher in the national school, Killavullen, County Cork, who has been deprived of his share of the result fees, to which he became entitled on an examination of the pupils in December, 1892, in consequence of some irregularity in the record of the attendance of pupils, for which Mr. Fitzgerald was not in the least degree responsible; if the District Inspector of National Schools has reported favourably of the progress of the pupils generally, and spoken in terms of commendation of the way in which the assistant teacher has discharged his duties; and whether he will consider the desirability of advising the Commissioners of National Education to pay Mr. Fitzgerald the result fees he has earned?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the results fees that accrued from the annual results inspection of this school in December, 1892, were cancelled because the records of the pupils' attendances during the results year were wholly unreliable, and the Inspector was unable to certify, as a condition of payment, that the accounts were correct and trustworthy. Under these circumstances, it was not possible to grant any portion of results fees to the assistant teacher, Mr. Fitzgerald. There is no complaint recorded against this assistant, and there is no special Report regarding him personally. The school, I believe, although not free from defects, has on the whole made fair progress as regards the proficiency of its classes. The Commissioners have, however, no power under their Rules to pay results fees, or any part thereof, in the case of the non-fulfilment of the fundamental condition of duly certified accounts of attendances, &c.

PRISON-MADE GOODS FOR THE POST OFFICE.

MR. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the belts, pouches, leggings, and leather articles required by the Post Office have hitherto been made under contract with private firms; whether it is intended in future to have these articles made by prisoners in Her Majesty's gaols; whether this change of system will involve extra cost of instruction and waste of time and material through the incompetence of the men employed; and whether he can give an estimate of what saving, if any, will result from the change?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The supply of leggings by the Commissioners of Prisons dates from a period when the right hon. Gentleman himself was Home Secretary. The supply of belts and pouches from the same source is more recent. The present intention is to continue to obtain these articles from that source. I am not aware that there is any extra cost for instruction or waste of time and materials; but if there is, I presume that the Prison Commissioners have taken these matters into consideration in fixing the price of the articles. The estimated saving is about £100 a year.

GERMAN-MADE BRUSHES.

MR. HOLLAND (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will explain why it is that

German-made brushes are allowed to be imported into this country, packed in large cases, marked with the words "Made in Germany," whilst the brushes themselves bear no mark whatever to indicate their origin?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): The practice referred to by the hon. Member in itself discloses no offence against the Merchandise Marks Act. The case would, of course, be different if the brushes were subsequently sold or exposed for sale with a covering or label attached applying a false trade description to them.

LOSS OF LIFE IN RECENT GALES.

MR. M'CARTAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give any particulars as to the loss of lives and fishing boats during the recent storm off the southern coast of Ireland; and if he can state how many poor fishermen are reported as missing?

MR. MUNDELLA: The Reports received by the Board of Trade to date are as follows:—Two Norwegian ships stranded (crews saved); one Irish lugger foundered with all hands; one man washed overboard from a Manx lugger; one foreign lugger driven from her anchors, and one Irish lugger dismasted (no lives lost); nets of five luggers lost, of which four were Irish and one Manx. I am glad to say that the results of the recent gale on the south coast of Ireland are not turning out so disastrously as was at first anticipated, but the Board of Trade Returns are not yet complete.

2ND BATTALION DORSET REGIMENT.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the 2nd Battalion of the Dorset Regiment, now quartered at Belfast, is in a satisfactory condition, or in a state of demoralisation as has been recently alleged?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The battalion is reported to be in a satisfactory condition, and I have already said in answer to a question that the reports of a recent occurrence in barracks were greatly exaggerated.

VOLUNTEERS AND GUN LICENCES.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Excise officers are within their rights in asking members of the Volunteer and Yeomanry Forces for their gun licences when they are engaged in shooting their annual course according to the Queen's Regulations on a Government inspected rifle range; and, if not, will he kindly issue Orders to prevent such demands being made on members of the Auxiliary Forces?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT (who replied) said: Members of Volunteer and Yeomanry forces are exempt from Gun Licence Duty when using guns on duty or in target practice. This exemption should be well known to Excise officers. If the hon. Member has any particular case in view where the exemption has been refused I will cause further inquiry to be made on being furnished with the particulars.

EVICTIONS IN SOUTH LEITRIM.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many evictions have taken place in the parish of Drumreilly, in South Leitrim, since the 1st of January, 1893; how many of the farms have been occupied by planters since that period; and whether, with a view to preventing the undue creation of these tenancies, he will provide that the compensation proposed to be paid to planters under the Evicted Tenants Bill shall not be payable to any planter who entered into possession after the 1st of January, 1893?

MR. J. MORLEY: Eight evictions have taken place in this parish since the date mentioned. None of these evicted holdings have been occupied by new tenants, though I am informed that two such tenants occupy six farms from which tenants had been evicted prior to the 1st of January, 1893.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

STANDING COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND).

RESOLUTION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, as amended [20th April],

"That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills, introduced by a Minister of the Crown, relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47 shall apply to the said Standing Committee:

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with Fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged :

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) : It may be convenient that I should state the course which the Government propose to take on the Amendments now upon the Paper, as it is one which, I hope, will facilitate the discussion of this question. There are two Amendments which stand at the head of the Paper relating to the composition of the Committee, one of them in the name of the hon. Member for Partick and the other in the name of the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire. The hon. Member for Partick will perhaps excuse me for saying that I am not altogether aware of the object with which the hon. Member moves his Amendment, for it is in a contrary direction to what is the general opinion of gentlemen who act and vote with him. I take it that the "qualifications of the Members selected" refers to their special knowledge of any special question before the Committee, and the "composition of the House" relates rather to the voting power of the two sides of the House. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Renfrewshire is quite clear as to its objects. Its purpose is to give instructions to the Committee of Selection to select Members for the Grand Committee, so as to approximate the balance of parties in the Grand Committee to that of the whole House. When I introduced this proposal it was not as a Party matter, but for the purpose of promoting Scotch business and facilitating the transaction of other business. Other interpretations have been put upon my words, but I think those hon. Members who know me will believe that I was perfectly sincere in the description which I gave of my intentions in introducing the proposal. Certainly, I am going to give a very great proof of that sincerity by saying that the Government accept as a practical proposal, and as a concession which we are quite ready to make to the feelings of hon. Members who do not agree with the original proposal, the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire (Mr. Renshaw). The consequence will be that the composition of the Grand Committee will be a true and thorough exponent of Scotch opinion, and the House at large will then be able either to defer to Scotch opinion—to accept the work in the shape in which it comes back to the House—or, if they think sufficiently strongly on the question, to go counter to that opinion, and then they will do so with their eyes open, and only upon due cause. When once this concession is made, I do not think, on looking through the other Amendments on the Paper, that there is anything which requires very serious consideration by the House. Apart from the Amendment of the hon. Member for Islington, which either is or is not in Order—it is not for me to say—the remaining Amendments refer to the classes of Bills that should, or should not, be referred to the Grand Committee. The Government have given the assurance that the only Government measures to be referred this Session to the Scotch Grand Committee are the Scotch Local Government Bill and the Fatal Accidents Bill; and that being the case, the Government are bound to resist all the Amendments which limit the scope of the Committee. Under these circumstances, I earnestly hope that the House will allow this discussion to close. Hon. Members on the Government side, and, I believe, many hon. Members on the opposite side, are willing to have the Scotch Local Government Bill laid before the House, and immediately the question of the Grand Committee shall be settled I propose to ask leave to bring in the Local Government Bill.

Amendment proposed, in line 9, after the words "Committee of Selection," to insert the words

"who shall have regard in such appointment to the desirability of approximating the balance of parties in the Committee to that of the whole House, and."—(*Mr. Renshaw.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.) said, he must congratulate the Government on having climbed down. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] The concession did not go so far as the Opposition wished, because they objected to the proposal altogether. He could truly say there was no enthusiasm whatever in favour of this proposal in Scotland. In proof of that he could only quote *The North British Daily Mail*, which was the leading Gladstonian paper in Scotland.

Mr. SPEAKER : The House is not now on the Main Question, but simply on the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Renfrew.

Mr. HOZIER said, he was merely pointing out that the concession of this Amendment did not do away with the objections to the scheme. Even *The North British Daily Mail* said——[*Cries of* "Order!"] He did not see why he should not refer to *The North British Daily Mail*. That newspaper said that the scheme of the Grand Committee was a temporary expedient, "about which few people are enthusiastic." [*Cries of* "Order!"]

*Mr. SPEAKER : The remarks of the hon. Gentleman would be perfectly appropriate when I put the Main Question after the Amendments have been disposed of.

Mr. HOZIER said, he would only point out that the Government had now certainly changed very much from their position of last week. *The North British Daily Mail* had said that the Government did not know their own mind, and he would only emphasise the fact that this very day last week the Government did not hold the opinion which they at present held. The Leader of the House then said—

> "As I understand the arguments put forward in support of the Amendment, they are that the 15 additional Members are to be taken from one political Party in order to neutralise the other 70. Such a proposal is one to which we cannot listen for a moment. If Members are to be added to the Committee, they must be chosen on the principle on which Members are selected for other Committees."

On the other hand, he quite admitted that the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) had been successful in having his opinion accepted by the rest of the Cabinet, because, though he tried to minimise the words he used, he apparently was strongly in favour of this proposal from the first. In other words, a fortnight ago the Secretary for War was in favour of a proposal which the Leader of the House derided last week. What the Opposition objected to in regard to this proposal was the accentuation of so-called Scottish opinion which it brought about. The Scottish Unionists were in a minority of 23 to 49 on Imperial questions, but not on local questions. Even on Imperial questions, however, according to the votes at the last Election, in the view of the Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney), who was a past master in proportional representation, the figures ought to be as 33 to 39. The concession would in no real way remedy this grievance, and would not prevent Scottish Gladstonian opinion from being unduly accentuated. The Scottish Gladstonian Members had been proved to be wrong before now on several most important matters, such as the Fisheries Bill, Temperance, Education, and the Church. [*Cries of* "Order!"] He could quite understand why the Secretary for War succeeded in having his opinion accepted by the rest of the Cabinet. After all, what good did the acceptance of this proposal do to the Unionists? Hon. Members opposite would analyse every single Division that took place, and the result would be that all these Members that were added would be considered simply as nothing at all. The Secretary for War might also have urged that on the Committee there were amongst the Gladstonians 10 who were Members of the Government and five who were practising barristers. Fifteen Scottish Gladstonian Members would find it extremely awkward to attend regularly, and it would be by no means inconvenient to them that 15 Unionist Members should be added with whom they would be able to pair. If hon. Members from Scotland were absent, and had not paired, their votes could not be considered as expressing Scottish opinion ; but, on the other hand, if they were paired with any of the English Members, their votes would no doubt be counted in the careful analysis that would be made. He was borne out in his opinion upon this concession by the Member for Dumfries (Mr. Reid), who, from his point of view, said that he would not for a moment ask for, or agree to, a Committee which did not consist exclusively of Scottish Members, while the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow, on March 6, 1888, said—

"As for this peddling and pottering through Grand Committees it is not wanted by the people of Scotland. It will not satisfy them, and it will not cure the evils complained of."

Mr. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) said, he attached more importance than his hon. Friend did to this concession. He thought it was an important one, and he did not accept it grudgingly. He did not need to enter into an explanation of his Amendment, because the present Amendment was a larger one. He regarded the present Amendment as important, because it accepted the desirableness of forming this Scottish Grand Committee not in accordance with the division of Members in Scotland, but according to the old principle, and in accordance with the composition of this House. If the Committee had been entirely in accordance with the composition of this House, he would have approved of it heartily. This Amendment went a long way towards recognising the old principle of following the proportional composition of the House, and it therefore removed a great part of his objection to the proposal of the Goverment for establishing a Scotch Grand Committee.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.) said, he did not think it was necessary that they should compare the concession the Government had now made too closely with their previous utterances. Without undue comment, he thought his hon. Friend behind him (Mr. Hozier) was perfectly right in saying that, though this was a substantial concession, it was not one which in its nature could remove the fundamental objections they had to the proposals of the Government. It did not do so for more than one reason. But many of these reasons he would be out of Order in dealing with. He would simply say, with regard to the Amendment of his hon. Friend, that it was intended by its author to remedy one, and one only, of the objections they felt to the plan of the Government. That objection was that the proposed Grand Committee would not, as it stood originally, be a reflection of the composition of the House. It would not be a reflection even now. If the Government had chosen to accept the Amendment which was pressed upon them by his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, and by his hon. Friend the Member for Partick and others, and had allowed 30 Members to be appointed for the purpose of redressing any disparity that might exist, then, no doubt, the fundamental injustice would have been largely remedied. However, the Government refused the Amendment, and he thought they were now in the rather inconsistent position of having conceded the whole principle which the Opposition asked for when they put down the Amendment, without carrying the principle which they accepted to its logical conclusion. He thanked the Government for what they had done; but he would point out that, even as regarded the particular objection which this Amendment was intended to meet, obviously it only met it halfway.

Mr. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk) said, he should like to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Members appointed by the Committee of Selection were all to be taken from the Unionist Party? If that was done, he quite agreed that, to some extent, their objections would be removed. But he should certainly have preferred to have seen the composition of the Committee one which was the exact reflection of the political complexion of the House rather than, as would be, an approximation to it. He thought the time of the House would have been very much saved if the Government had come to the conclusion at which they had now arrived long ago.

Sir MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he wished to know whether the 15 English Members were to be allocated to the minority in the House? He hardly thought the Grand Committee would prove satisfactory either to the Scottish Members or to the House generally. There was a very strong feeling against it in Scotland and on both sides of the House; therefore, it would give satisfaction to nobody. As they had the concession from the Government, he would be willing to let the matter go in the belief that these 15 Members were to be allocated to the minority.

*Mr. JACKS (Stirlingshire) said, he felt very strong disappointment that the Government had given way in this matter. It seemed to him that the Opposition had taken much too serious a view of this modest proposal. At the last Election there was scarcely a single candidate in Scotland who did not advocate some devolution of all Scottish business. No sooner was this simple proposal made by the Government than the Opposition ascended to the very mountain top of panic, and pointed out dangers and prophesied disasters as the result of the proposal. Now, what did the Amendment mean? It meant that the Scotch Committee was not to be a Scotch Committee, but a hybrid one, and the concession made by the Government was most important. The Scotch Party consisted of 49 Radicals and 23 Conservatives and Unionists, but there were eight official or semi-official Members who certainly could not be counted upon to attend, and who would, as a matter of fact, not attend. This reduced the number of Liberals to 41, and the Amendment adding to the Conservative Members 15, who were not to be Scotch Representatives, and who must be Conservatives, made the figures 41 Liberals and 38 Conservatives. He confessed he greatly regretted such a concession having been made. If the Opposition was unjustifiable at first, it had now become ridiculous. The right hon. Gentleman was pursuing a shadow and losing the substance, and he thought it would be far better to drop the proposal as it now stood altogether, and come forward boldly with a scheme of thorough devolution of purely Scottish affairs to some Scottish assembly. This would put before them something of substance and sense, and would call forth very little, if any, more opposition than had been offered to the machinery now before the House, and which all felt and acknowledged would be absolutely inadequate.

Sir E. CLARKE (Plymouth) said, the concession made by the Government had no doubt much diminished the objections made on that side of the House to the proposal of a Grand Committee; but he saw not merely from the speech of the hon. Member who had just spoken, but from other indications, that it had very greatly diminished the value of the Committee in the eyes of the supporters of the Government. The position that had now been arrived at was one that made them regret that five days of Parliamentary time should have been spent on a proposal which came now to such a feeble conclusion. When one considered the numerical distribution of the Members of the Committee, one would see that the Scottish Liberal Members who were very anxious for this Committee would gain no real advantage in a majority of that Committee which put them in a better position than they would have been if the sound course had been adopted of standing by the ordinary constitution of the Grand Committees. He did not think the result now arrived at was so different from the result which would have been arrived at if an ordinary Grand Committee had been appointed as to make it worth their while to continue a controversy which, solely through the fault of the Government, had occupied so much of their valuable time. Although, as a matter of practice, he did not think the Government and their Scottish Liberal supporters gained anything by the adoption of the plan in its present form, he did not think they need waste valuable time by discussing what after all was a theoretical objection. But there was one point which ought to be noted before any final agreement was come to. The result of the adoption of this modified state of things would be that instead of the Committee being constituted by an impartial authority, as in the case of an ordinary Grand Committee, they would have all the Scotch Members sitting on it, and it would be the duty of the authority appointing the Committee to select 15 opponents of the Government in order to remedy as far as possible the disproportion in political influence which would then exist. He did think it a serious objection that 15 Members of a Committee should be selected with the express purpose and duty of counterbalancing a political majority. It was a great pity that any such proposal should have been selected. It was some satisfaction, however, to know that no Private Bills would be sent before the Committee, who would only have to consider this Session the Scotch Local Government Bill and the Fatal Accidents Bill. It must be understood that in assenting to this proposal the Unionist Party repudiated the idea that they were making any concession in point of principle or any agreement as to the permanent form in future of such a Committee.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's, &c.) said, his hon. Friend the Member for Stirlingshire, who had blown hot and cold in this matter, had given the House to understand that the whole of the 15 Members were to be added from the minority. They had no answer from the Government to that suggestion.

This so-called concession of the Government was, to his mind, no concession at all. They had been from the first opposing this Resolution on account of the impossibility of it reflecting the composition of the whole House upon the Scottish Committee, and they had not even now any assurance from the Government that the utmost efforts would be made to redress the inequality. Whereas in the ordinary Standing Committee the proportion would be 46 to 41, under the proposal of the Government the proportion, even if the whole of the 15 Members were added from the minority, would be 49 to 38. It had been said that the official Members would not attend. Were they to add a direction to the Committee of Selection, or to some other body, that the official Members who graced the Front Bench, and who had added so much to the enlightenment of the House in the whole of these proceedings, were not to attend on the Committee? Before this Amendment was agreed to they ought to have some further declaration from the Government as to whether it was their intention that the whole of the 15 Members were to be added on the side of the minority, and even if that was done, the proportion on the Committee would operate in the most unfair manner against those who represented the minority in that matter.

*Sir C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) said, that, speaking on behalf of a large number of Scottish Members on that side, he did not oppose the concession of the Government, which he regarded as one of considerable importance. As the scope of the Grand Committee would obviously be the consideration of the two Bills mentioned by the Secretary for Scotland, he thought it was much better to allow the machinery to be set up as speedily as possible, and so avoid any prolonged controversy which might prevent the Bills from being proceeded with. But they did not regard it as an arrangement that could be at all a permanent one, and they could not at all accept it as a fulfilment of what they were led to expect would be granted for the consideration of all sorts of Scottish business. He trusted the experiment might succeed, and that, in future years, the original plan of the Government would be adopted.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): Following the observations of the hon. Member who has just resumed his seat, I wish to say this. If the hon. Member contends that this is a simple piece of machinery, set up for the one particular Bill, it must be understood that the House does not commit itself in any way whatever to the principle or constitution of the Grand Committee, and that it is, even in the opinion of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but a piece of machinery to pass one particular Bill. There is a good deal of hesitation among hon. Members behind me as to whether this particular Bill should be referred; and what I wish to accentuate is this—that, notwithstanding the concession of the Government, and notwithstanding the change in its original proposition, we regard this now as simply a Sessional arrangement for the present year, and we also take it that hon. Members opposite do not consider the House committed by this Grand Committee to anything in the nature of the original proposal.

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.) said, he regarded this as a storm in a teacup. He had had as much experience of Grand Committees as any man in the House, and was satisfied that in nine cases out of ten, if not in 19 out of 20, those Committees did not vote upon Party lines. Under these circumstances, he really thought that all this heated discussion was unnecessary.

*Mr. WODEHOUSE (Bath) said, he had a slight verbal alteration to suggest, and he proposed to amend the Amendment by omitting the words "desirability of approximating," in order to insert "approximation of." This proposal he made in the interests of precision and definiteness, and he thought it sufficiently explained itself.

Mr. RENSHAW said, he regarded this as an improvement of his own proposal, and was willing to accept the Amendment.

Sir G. TREVELYAN: The Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Renshaw) has been before the House for some time, and, as the Government has carefully considered it and accepted it in perfect good faith, I do not think it is wise at the last moment to adopt other words. I may remind the hon. Gentleman that the Government cannot dictate to the Committee of Selection; and as I am sure my hon. Friend drew his Amendment with great care, the Government would rather adhere to that.

Sir J. MOWBRAY (Oxford University) said that, as Chairman of the Committee of Selection, he had been much disappointed to hear what had been said by the Secretary for Scotland. That Committee had for 12 years performed their duties to the satisfaction of the House, and they ought to have definite instructions as to what they were to do and what they were not to do. He earnestly hoped the Secretary for Scotland would see that the Amendment was very important as concerned the Committee of Selection.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not see why there should be any difference or misunderstanding on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman who last spoke is, of course, a great authority on the question, but I must say I think it is not desirable that the House should dictate to the Committee of Selection, who always conduct their business, under the guidance of the right hon. Gentleman, in a manner which commands the admiration and confidence of every section of the House. It appears to me that the words of the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire are perfectly clear and intelligible, and that it is unnecessary at the last moment to change them; but if so high an authority as the right hon. Gentleman thinks that the Amendment is an improvement, the Government are not prepared to resist it. It is a mere question of wording; our object is identical, and we have the same thing in our minds.

Amendment amended, by leaving out the words "desirability of approximating," and inserting the words "approximation of." — (*Mr. Wodehouse.*)

Words, as amended, inserted.

*Mr. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said, he wished to move, in line 11, after the word "discharged," to insert the words—

> "Provided that no Bill may be committed to the said Committee respecting the establishment or endowment or the disestablishment or disendowment of religion."

They had had assurances from the Government that a Disestablishment Bill would not be submitted to this Committee, and such assurances were quite satisfactory in so far as the present Session was concerned, but he would point out that the precedent now created would be judged, not in the light of the explanations which had been given by the Government, but by the terms of the proposal itself. He hoped, therefore, the Amendment would commend itself to the Government on its merits. It must be remembered that, notwithstanding the promise given, it would still be in the power of supporters of the Government to move that a Bill of the kind indicated in his Amendment should be committed. To guard against a discussion on such a subject hereafter, he thought it advisable that some such proviso should be accepted, or that they should get an assurance from the Government that their silence on the point should not be held to leave the question open in the future. For that purpose he formally moved his proviso.

Amendment proposed, in line 11, after the word "discharged," to insert the words—

> "Provided that no Bill may be committed to the said Committee respecting the establishment or endowment or the disestablishment or disendowment of religion." — (*Mr. J. A. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir G. TREVELYAN said, that if the Government accepted this Amendment they would not end the discussion of this Committee to-day or next week, because if they admitted one exception they must admit all. To exclude specially any Bill from the purview of this Committee implied that all Bills not so excluded stood a certain advantage. The Government had given an absolute assurance as to the Bills to be brought before the Committee. No Government could afford to break such a pledge—not even in the shape of not actively resisting with all its power any proposal of a private Member to refer a Bill of the excepted character to the Committee. He trusted the Amendment would be withdrawn, and that they would get to the Local Government Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he admitted the difficulty in which the Government were placed. But it arose out of the position they themselves had chosen to assume. The words of their Resolution implied every conceivable kind of Bill, Private and Public, controversial and non-controversial; and they would remain on the Paper as the Sessional Order, and the only safeguards rested on the assurances of Ministers. He accepted the good faith of the Government that they had nothing else in their minds but two Bills. But while taking the word of the Government for this Session, they felt that the House to-day was taking a step which might be fruitful of ill effects in the future; and the necessity lay on them as far as they could to diminish that danger. The fear he had with regard to his hon. Friend's Amendment was that if theHouse accepted it, and did not accept others, they might in the future be considered as having assented to the proposition—to which they did not assent—that Bills other than those connected with the Church might be referred to this Committee. He saw danger in their appearing to concentrate their efforts even on so important a subject as the disestablishment of the Church of Scotlaad. That was a reason why they should not press such provisos, although he himself had one to which he did not think those particular objections occurred.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR** moved to insert the following proviso:—

> "Provided that no Bill be committed to the said Committee which does not refer to the whole of Scotland."

The theory of the Government Resolution was that they wanted Scottish expert opinion upon Scottish Bills. He had given reasons for disapproving many of the principles which underlay the Resolution; but he did understand that where every Scottish constituency was interested in a Bill, and no other constituency was concerned with it, there might be some show of reason for the Committee. But that reason absolutely fell to the ground when they were dealing with Bills which did not refer to the whole, but only to a fraction of Scotland. On such Bills, Scotsmen as Scotsmen, and Scottish Representatives as Scottish Representatives had no more right to express an opinion than Irish or English Representatives. Take the Crofters Act. It applied only in a few counties in the North and West of Scotland. It involved broad, general considerations, on which the whole House was equally competent to deal; and he wished to know why the Member for East Lothian, or the Member for Midlothian, should be specially qualified, simply because he was a Scottish Member, to deal with that question. They were not experts on crofter subjects. It immediately concerned the crofter counties, and no more specially concerned the South of Scotland than the North of England or Wales. ["Oh!"] It was so. The Member for Aberdeen appeared to think that he (Mr. Balfour) had uttered a paradox, but probably the rest of the House might think he had uttered a truism. Would the hon. Member inform them what possible title he had to be regarded as an expert in Highland matters any more than the Representative of a constituency just on the other side of the Tweed, like that of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs? There was no difference between them in that respect. He hoped the Government would accept this proviso, because it would carry out more completely the object they desired.

Amendment proposed, in line 11, after the word "discharged," to insert the words—

> "Provided that no Bill be committed to the said Committee which does not refer to the whole of Scotland."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir G. **TREVELYAN** said, that the right hon. Gentleman had introduced an Amendment which was ingenious and interesting in itself, and did great honour to his powers of seeing aspects of a question which nobody else had seen before him, when he got up, but in which, when he sat down, everybody recognised not only novelty, but very considerable substance. He (Sir G. Trevelyan) thought that no Scotchman would admit that the population, the Representatives, the newspaper Press of Glasgow was not more interested in, and had not greater knowledge upon, Highland questions than the population, the Representatives, and the newspaper Press of London, Manchester, or Newcastle. They never should admit that for a moment. As a nation, they had complete solidarity of interests, and a most remarkable solidarity of knowledge of the circumstances of the whole country; and, indeed, their great argument for moving this Committee was that Scottish Members were not only conversant themselves with Scottish interests, but their constituents had such a thorough knowledge of those interests that they kept their Members up to the mark with information. What the right hon. Gentleman had failed to do was to draw any distinction between his Amendment and others on the Paper, which had either been withdrawn or passed over in silence. The Leader of the Opposition had been careful not to commit his Party on matters of principle beyond the present Session, and the Government equally were not willing to bind themselves at this moment in any manner further with regard to the future after the pledges they had given.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, the Secretary for Scotland had committed himself, and endeavoured to commit the House to one proposal—namely, the consideration of all Bills introduced by a Minister of the Crown relating exclusively to Scotland, whilst they had undertaken with reference to the Session that they would not, except by order of the House, commit any particular Bills except two.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) said, that the argument of the right hon. Gentleman seemed founded on these words, as if they included everything, even a Bill relating to crofters. But it had to be read with what followed —namely, Bills

> "relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them."

The House was not likely to make an order against the will of the Government and of the Opposition combined, and alter the pledge that the Government had given. It was perfectly plain that a Crofters Bill could not be referred to the Committee.

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY (Buteshire) said, that the point of his right hon. Friend was that the Secretary for Scotland dealt with the advantage of an expert Committee; and on crofter legislation they could only predicate expert information from a small proportion of Scottish Members. As to the solidarity of Scottish knowledge, he did not know if there were more ignorant persons in the world than some of the constituents of the right hon. Gentleman. If the Government got their Registration Bill, some 25,000 Irish would be added to the right hon. Gentleman's own constituency, and what did they know about those questions?

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) said, that the concession now asked would reduce the proposal of the Government to nothing at all. It was apparently directed to a single measure.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had used one measure as an illustration, and so did not give any other.

MR. D. CRAWFORD defied the right hon. Gentleman to produce another illustration of the same kind. If he extended his principle to other cases, it showed at once the absurdity of the Amendment. The measure he cited referred to a particular country. Let him mention another that might come near it. Take the sea fisheries. Of course, the sea was not in the middle of the land. In a sense, knowledge of that subject would be confined to a certain portion of Scotland, and if they went on refusing to send Bills to the Committee on such grounds they reduced the proposal to absurdity. He hoped his right hon. Friend would not dream of accepting the Amendment. He thought they had already carried concession to the verge of weakness.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said, he rose to point out the inutility of attempting to conciliate an Opposition that would not be conciliated; and on that subject he would not use his own language, but words of wisdom from the Member for West Birmingham, who said—

> "It is not possible for a Liberal Government to give satisfaction to Tory opponents, and it is not desirable.

Then the right hon. Gentleman went on. He was speaking at Newcastle, and—

> "He asked the oldest inhabitant of Newcastle if he could recollect a time when, a Liberal Government being in power, and trying to do Liberal work, the Tories did not say that it brought the country to the verge of ruin, and that England was becoming a country in which no gentleman could live."

What had the right hon. Gentleman's friends opposite been doing on this and other questions? They had been trying to make the Government do that which was impossible and undesirable—concede everything to their Tory opponents. He remembered when this question of Grand Committees came on years ago——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Gentleman is going rather wide of the consideration of this Amendment.

Sir D. MACFARLANE said, he would not continue to do so. He would only suggest to the Government that during the whole of this Session and last Session they had surely had enough experience of trying to satisfy Tory opinion. If the Government would stand fast it would take no longer time to defeat these Amendments than to accept them.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Could the House have had a better illustration of the way to waste time than in the speech which we have just listened to? It is the time of the Government the hon. Member has been wasting. As far as I am concerned, I make no complaint. He alleges of me and of my friends that our object is to spend the time of the Government. I do not complain when that allegation is made, especially when it is made by one who offers us, in himself, so powerful an ally. I hope that in the future as in the past he will not spare those interesting extracts from my speeches. They are always listened to by me with the greatest interest, and, I may say, with the greatest admiration. I think, however, that the hon. Member was wasting time in lecturing a Government which one would have thought was above any criticism of that kind. The Government themselves are the greatest offenders. What is their position this afternoon? They come down here and boast of having made a great concession. They say that they are particularly anxious to discuss the next Bill on the Paper, and that to enable them to do so they have made this great concession. Then comes another Amendment, which they are asked to accept. Why do they not carry out the same policy in regard to it? If they are right in making, as they say, a great concession, why not also make a small concession? We have been repeatedly reminded that this is only a Sessional Order, and that it is to apply only to one, or, at most, to two Bills this Session. My right hon. Friend proposes that it shall not, in terms, apply to any other class of Bills which, by the consent of the Government, it is not intended to apply to. Yet the Government refuse to accept the Amendment. Is not that wasting time? Why do they object, in drawing up this Sessional Order, to exclude definitely any class of Bills other than that to which the two Bills they have named belong? We want the exclusion, because we do not wish to commit ourselves, or wish to commit ourselves as little as possible, to a principle. The present proposal, if it were accepted, would not alter in the slightest degree the intention expressed by the Government, who not only at great length discuss the propriety of this matter, but allow the hon. Member below me to get up and occupy a good quarter of an hour. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] I should have said, to try to occupy a good quarter of an hour in irrelevant matter—["Oh!"]—and I have no doubt he would have succeeded but for the interposition of the Chair.

Dr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, this discussion showed the extreme inconvenience of oral Amendments being sprung on the House, and of not putting all the Amendments down on the Paper. As far as he was able to follow the Motion, it would exclude from reference to the Committee almost any Bill if it did not relate absolutely to the whole of Scotland, no matter though it dealt with 999 out of 1,000 parts. A Scotch Bill which occupied a good deal of time in the late Parliament was the Burghs Police Bill. That measure did not apply to the whole of Scotland, and, under the terms of the present Amendment, it would be excluded from the consideration of the Scotch Grand Committee, because it did not apply to every town in Scotland.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 177; Noes 212.—(Division List, No. 35.)

***Mr. HOZIER** (Lanarkshire, S.) moved an Amendment providing that all Members representing Scotch constituencies should be excused from serving on Private Bill Committees. He said the Amendment would not touch Select Committees, attendance upon which was only voluntary; but as attendance upon Private Bill Committees was compulsory, and such Committees sat five days a week, he did not see how an unfortunate Scottish Member who had to attend by order of the House, under fear of imprisonment in the Clock Tower, or some similar punishment, all the meetings of a Private Bill Committee could possibly attend twice a week at the same hours the meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

"Provided always, that all the Members representing Scottish constituencies shall be excused from serving on Private Bill Committees."—(*Mr. Hozier.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I do not think the hon. Member will press this Amendment. He has called attention to the labours that may be thrown on Scottish Members, and, no doubt, has evoked a certain amount of sympathy. But it must be remembered that from this time forth Scottish Members will be regarded not in their character as Scottish Members, but in their character as Members of the Standing Committee, and the practice with regard to Members of Standing Committees is well known to be that they are not on that account to be excused from serving on Private Bill Committees. But the Members of the Committee of Selection are men of consideration for their brother Members, and when a man is engaged in hard work upon a Standing Committee it is probable that during that time he will be excused from service on Private Bill Committees and will be allowed to serve at some later period of the Session. I earnestly trust that the hon. Gentleman will not press his Amendment and that we may be allowed to proceed with the Resolution, and to place the Local Government Bill before those Scottish County Councils which will be meeting almost in a week's time.

MR. GOSCHEN: I think my hon. Friend is quite right in calling attention to this point. It is a very serious one, because undoubtedly there will be a considerable obligation on Scottish Members to attend the Committee, and it will be extremely inconvenient for them to be put on Private Bill Committees. At the same time, I am sure the House will be sorry to lose on the Private Bill Committees the services of many Members who have done excellent work on those Committees. This, however, shows the anomaly of the proposal of the Government. It is one of those difficulties which are coherent in the whole system, and which seem to me to vitiate it in a very important particular. I do not think my hon. Friend will be well advised to divide on the subject. He has raised the question of the difficulty in which the Scottish Members will be placed, and I am sure that the Committee of Selection will do everthing possible to enable Scottish Members to perform their duties.

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton) said, the Secretary for Scotland had stated that Members of Standing Committees were not at present exempted from service on Private Bill Committees. The Scotch Committee was to be an addition to the present Standing Committees, and he wished to know whether in future Scottish Members were to be excluded from service on the Standing Committees on Law and Trade? He was not anxious, Heaven knew! to add to the duties of Scottish Members, but he felt bound to point out that when the House interfered with their functions it came very near to interfering with their privileges.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, it would be a matter entirely for the Committee of Selection to decide, whether a man should be put on more than one Standing Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

CAPTAIN HOPE (Linlithgow) said, that on the general question of the appointment of this Committee he desired as a Scotsman and a Scottish Member to enter his most earnest protest against the whole idea and principle of the Government proposal. Scottish business, he held, had the same right to the attention and consideration of the House as the business from other parts of the country. He protested against the idea that Scottish business should be withdrawn from the House of Commons in any degree. It had been contended that such a measure as the Scotch Local Government Bill ought to be sent to a Grand Committee composed wholly or principally of Scottish Members, because they must be supposed to know more about Scottish local matters than English or Irish Members did, but he protested against the absurdity of believing that at the present time Scottish Members were returned to that House on account of their knowledge of Scottish local affairs. The political representation of Scotland had no real reference to Scottish feeling in regard to local matters. In proof of that, he need only refer to the composition of the great majority, if not the whole, of the County Councils in

Scotland. In his own County Council, of which he was Convener, one of his strongest supporters in the Council was a gentleman who invariably proposed and seconded his opponent in politics. If further proof were wanted of the difference between the feeling of Scotland on political and on local matters, he would refer the Secretary for Scotland to the recent Conference of County Councils in Edinburgh; and he would find that many of the crotchets of those who were his supporters were rejected by a very considerable majority by the Conference—when discussed from the local and county point of view. He did not think the concession which had been made by the Government had made the Committee any more satisfactory or palatable to genuine Scottish opinion. But he was glad it had been made, because it showed more clearly than before the unfairness of the proposal originally made. What good, he should like to ask the Government, was to be obtained by this Committee. He was quite prepared to give full credit to the Secretary for Scotland for his intentions in the matter, but the real cue to the Motion, he believed, was that stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he said the other day he could give no definite answer to some questions until the Government had succeeded in getting Scottish business out of the House. If that was the object, his protest was all the more called for. Scottish business ought to have the same fair consideration from the House, which was the right of every part of the United Kingdom in the Imperial Parliament. If the idea of the Motion was the exclusion of Scottish business from the proper consideration of the House, it ought to be protested against by the whole of Scotland whenever Scotland could succeed in expressing her opinion fairly. If the Government had been genuinely anxious that the Local Government Bill should be fairly and properly considered by the County Councils, most of which began their meetings next week, they might have introduced the Bill three weeks ago, instead of spending the time of the House in discussing what he thought was a most mischievous proposal.

DR. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) said, he agreed with the hon. Gentleman that this Committee would not give satisfaction to the people of Scotland. He took occasion the other night to remark that when Home Rulers asked for bread they were offered a stone. The proposal of the Government since then had been whittled down, so that it was not even a stone of the ordinary character. It had become an adamantine rock, upon which their policy had split. The Government ought to rise superior to the occasion, and instead of going on with this patchwork abandon their Committee, and adopt some more effective and popular method of dealing with Scottish business.

*SIR H. MAXWELL said, that before the House went to a Division he would like to say a few words upon the Main Question before them, in order that the country might clearly understand the attitude of the Scottish Opposition Members with regard to it. There was no doubt they would hear in the near future, as they were at present hearing, a great deal as to the opposition to this innocent proposal of the Government. In fact, there was a great deal more in the proposal of the Government than met the eye, and he wished the people of Scotland to understand the reason why the Opposition had so strongly opposed the Motion. The Secretary for Scotland referred to the pledges which had been given, and to the way in which the proposals had been hedged round, as showing that the fears of the Opposition were unreasonable. But the right hon. Gentleman could not get rid of the fact that he was making a new departure and establishing a precedent; and the Opposition would be doing less than their duty if they did not see that the precedent was surrounded by adequate safeguards. The Government would come down next Session with the same, or a still greater, demand, and they would ask that the Motion should be not a Sessional but a Standing Order. That being so, it was the duty of the Opposition to see that safeguards were set round such a novel proposal. If the proposal now before the House was the same as when it was submitted three weeks ago, it might be said that the criticism of the Opposition had been futile, and the time had been wasted. But the time had not been wasted, and the proof was that the Government proposal was totally different from that to which they were asked to agree three weeks ago. What they were asked to agree to then was no Sessional Order.

Not a word about a Sessional Order fell from the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR G. TREVELYAN : I said it was to be a Sessional Order.

SIR H. MAXWELL: There was not a word said by the right hon. Gentleman on the first night about its being a Sessional Order.

SIR G. TREVELYAN : It was on the Paper, and was moved as a Sessional Order.

*SIR H. MAXWELL said, he was not sure about the exact technicality, but he believed before a Standing Order could be agreed to it must be moved as a Sessional Order. That was the procedure on originally setting up the Standing Committees. He appealed to hon. Members whether they did not understand from the Secretary for Scotland when he introduced the proposal that the change was to be permanent. At all events, the Opposition understood it was a permanent and not a Sessional Order. This was the sixth day on which they had discussed an Order which would apply to the remaining fraction of the Session—a Session which, according to the assurance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was not to be unduly prolonged. The proposal had been further limited to those measures which were introduced by a Minister of the Crown. That was an additional safeguard, certainly. But the Opposition were asked to be grateful for the concessions. He thought the gratitude ought to come from the opposite quarter; the Government ought to be grateful to the Opposition for making the proposal more acceptable to the general sense of the House of Commons. The Leader of the Opposition had endeavoured to get the House of Commons to consent to a proposition whereby the Bills referred to the Committee should be only those applying to Scotland as a whole, and he was bound to say that the arguments used against that proposal had been extremely unsatisfactory. They wished to secure that, seeing the Government were setting up a Committee upon a national basis, only questions of a national scope should be submitted to it, and they regretted that that proposal had not been adopted. Seeing that it had not been adopted, their opposition to the present novel proposal was only intensified. They still saw a great deal that was objectionable in it, and intended to resist it to the last.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN appealed to the House to now come to a decision upon the Motion. He thought that everyone would admit a six days' discussion was long enough regarding it. The object of the Government in submitting the Motion was to save time and accelerate the business of the House, and it was for that purpose he asked the House to allow the introduction of the Local Government Bill, which it was desirable to get printed and submitted to the County Councils at their meetings next week.

MR. GOSCHEN said, he was not going to contend against the wish of the right hon. Gentleman that an opportunity should now be given for introducing the Scotch Local Government Bill. He thought there was force in the view that the County Councils should have the Local Government Bill before them at their meetings. There was no desire to prolong the discussion on this Motion; and, so far as the Opposition was concerned, he would merely say they protested against it, not simply from the point of view of Scotland, although Scotsmen had the most right to protest against the withdrawal of Scottish business from this House; but he protested against it as an English Member—that Scottish business should be treated in a different way from English or Irish business. They had contended against the measure, as they looked upon it as an invasion of the constitutional rights of the different portions of the United Kingdom. As the proposal stood, it had rightly been described by the friends of the Government, one of whom had said that it had been thoroughly whittled down, another that it was absurd, and another that the Government had been reduced to impotency. That was the result of these Debates. They would divide against the Motion now as a protest, both on behalf of Scotland and on behalf of England, in order to show that, so far as the Unionist Party were concerned, it would be taken as no precedent for the setting up on a future occasion of any similar Committee.

MR. ANSTRUTHER rose——

MR. HUNTER rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

*MR. SPEAKER : I do not think there is any necessity to trouble the House with this Motion. I understand that the general feeling is that the discussion should end. If the hon. Gentleman has only a few remarks to make, that would still give time for the important business on the Paper.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER said, he only wanted to ask a question arising out of a remark of the Secretary for War before they were relegated to the half-way house upstairs. It was not likely to induce them to curtail their remarks if hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House displayed the extreme intolerance they had displayed throughout the whole of this Debate. He wanted to ask a question relating to the Bill about to be introduced. Only yesterday the Leader of the House said he hoped to take the Second Reading of the Bill next week. The procedure in the County Councils would probably be that the Bill would be laid on the table, and a sub-committee would be appointed to go through the Bill and consider its details.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman must confine himself to the Resolution before the House.

Main Question, as amended, put.

The House divided:—Ayes 232; Noes 207.—(Division List, No. 36.)

Ordered, That, in addition to the two Standing Committees appointed under Standing Order No. 47, a Standing Committee shall be appointed for the consideration of all Bills introduced by a Minister of the Crown relating exclusively to Scotland which may, by order of the House, be committed to them, and that the provisions of Standing Order No. 47, shall apply to the said Standing Committee:

That the said Standing Committee do consist of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with 15 other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, who shall have regard in such appointment to the approximation of the balance of Parties in the Committee to that of the whole House, and who shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by them, and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged.

That Standing Orders Nos. 49 and 50 do apply to the said Standing Committee.—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

MOTION.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

*Sir G. TREVELYAN asked leave to introduce a Bill to establish a Local Government Board for Scotland, and make further provision for local government in Scotland, and for other purposes. He said: In accordance with the usual custom in the relation of Scottish and English business, England has had the start of a year in its local government reform. There is a danger about this that the Scottish Bill may be moulded too closely on the English Bill, and that Scotland may only get what England has got already. But the Government have been fully alive to the dangers of this, and I hope it will be found by the House that they will be avoided. We have proposed to give Scotland all the good things that England has; that wherever Scotch local government is defective we will try to correct the defects, and where the system is more effective than the English system, that we will endeavour not to reduce it to the level of England, but to go on and improve it in the Scotch direction. The proposal which I have to lay before the House commences with the proposal which has not its like in the English Bill. The first provision of the measure which I am introducing to the House, consisting of five clauses, relates to the constitution of a Local Government Board for Scotland. Now, the Local Government Board for Scotland, best known as the Board of Supervision, is wanting in several very important particulars. It is wanting in its relation to Parliament, which is not that of a Board responsible to Parliament, and it is likewise wanting in the fact that it is not under a responsible Parliamentary Chief. In England there are public offices with all sorts of names; there is the Board of Trade, the Local Government Board, the India Office, the Colonial Office, the Committee of Council for Education. But whatever they are called, they are all public offices in the right acceptation of the word—Boards they are only in name; they are Departmental in reality, with a responsible Parliamentary Chief, who himself is responsible to Parliament. But the Board of Supervision is a Board indeed, of a salaried chairman, who has eight colleagues—there are the Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, two county gentlemen interested in local affairs, three Sheriffs (who receive £150 each as a stipend), and the Solicitor General for Scotland. The Board of Supervision is not responsible to Parliament—it has got no responsible chief. The Secretary for Scotland for the time being is its mouthpiece, if the Board of Supervision chooses to make him so, but they are not bound to supply him with information, and they are not bound to carry out the policy of the Government. It is not constituted as a public Department ought to be constituted. It is not responsible to Parliament as a public Department ought to be responsible. I must not say anything more in that strain without at once assuring the House, as is so often the case in our country, that the personal qualities of the men do much to correct the anomalies of the situation. The members who do the work of the Board of Supervision work as hard as men can do, and work well. The Chairman (Mr. Skelton) understands his business thoroughly, and performs it thoroughly, and gives to the performance of that business very eminent qualities which have distinguished him in other fields. The Sheriffs bestow on their business of advising the Board on legal matters the very greatest trouble, out of all proportion to their very modest stipends, and the Board is very well advised, indeed. Although the relations of the Board to the Secretary for Scotland are quite anomalous, I have always experienced, and I am sure that has been the case of my predecessors, the most prompt willingness to give all the information in the power of the Board, and a great desire as far as possible to suit their views to mine, and to meet every emergency in such a manner as I thought it ought to be met. But the men, on that very account, should have a good system to work under, and the time has come when the Board of Supervision should be remodelled. In the first place, the members should be much less numerous; they should be expected, all of them, to be always on the spot, and the business of the office should be their first duty, instead of only one among many, as it is the case with some of them. What we propose to do is this: The regular members of the Board will attend in Edinburgh as closely as the principal officers of the Local Government Board attend in London. There will be, according to our Bill, a Vice President, who will be a salaried officer, who will answer to and be the Chairman of the Board; one Sheriff, who will give legal advice, and whose stipend will represent the increased responsibility that is put upon him; and one medical man, who shall likewise hold a diploma in sanitary science, and who will do for an adequate salary the medical work both in the office and in the country.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What will be his salary?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: It is not in the Bill, but I should say it would probably be about £1,000 a year. It is high time that on a body which superintends the public health in Scotland a representative of medical and sanitary science should find a place. These three officers, with a salaried secretary, will constitute what I may call the inner circle of the Local Government Board in Scotland. That is a much larger Board than the Local Government Board in England, which in good truth consists of no one but the President; but the circumstances of Scotland differ very much from those of England. The work has to be done on the spot in Edinburgh, and only a general control can be exercised in London, and therefore we have modelled the Board as far as possible on the lines of the Irish Local Government Board, which hon. Members in some parts of the House think has its faults, but which at any rate is under the recognised system of responsibility to Parliament and of the official Parliamentary Chief in a manner that leaves nothing to be desired. We propose, therefore, that the President of the Board shall be the Secretary for Scotland as the Chief Secretary is President of the Board in Ireland, and that the Under Secretary for Scotland and the Solicitor General should be likewise members of the Board. You will then have in Edinburgh a small, compact, and, I think, well-selected group of administrators who will be entirely confined to the work of their Department, and in London during the Session you will have a Parliamentary Minister who is really and truly responsible to Parliament for the information he gives it, and for the policy of the Board, which the Secretary for Scotland cannot in any sense be said to be at the present time. I will not enter into the details of the provisions by which the Board is turned from a body meeting at intervals into an ever-active and ever-working Department of the State. Those provisions have been very carefully arranged after consultation with the experiences of London and Dublin. But one thing I must ask hon. Members to consider — namely, that this Bill largely extends self-government to Scotland. For purposes of check, for purposes of information, and of financial control the Local Government Board of Scotland shall henceforward be as efficient a body as human official experience can possibly make it, and we cannot attain that efficiency except on the long-tried condition—first, that the State should have an absolute call on the professional services of every one of those who do the work of the Board, and next, that the Board should be in immediate, confessed and acknowledged relations to Parliament. That is the body that the Board of Supervision shall be as reconstituted. Now, I will inform the House in what new development the proposals of the Government are based on three principles. In local bodies, where the constitution is not popular, we wish to make them in the full sense of the word representative; we desire to reduce to the lowest point the number of separate elections, and to simplify the electoral machinery as far as compatible with genuine representation; and we wish to give to the bodies so constituted increased powers, so that the communities all over the country may have in their hands the management of their own affairs, just as the Municipal Bodies in Scotland have had with such very great success. Now, in marking out these principles we find a state of things very different from that which prevailed in England. In England there were no Parish Councils—no representative parish bodies at all. In England the Boards of Guardians were in full operation in charge of the Poor Law, and very generally in charge of the public health. But in Scotland the whole country is mapped out into Parochial Boards, which manage the Poor Law as the Board of Guardians do in England. Public health is entrusted to District Committees, which are composed partly of freely-elected representatives and partly of delegates from the Parochial Boards. But these Parochial Boards are in their constitution anything but truly elective according to all the ideas which are now held of what an elective body should be. And, therefore, by popularising the constitution of Parochial Boards we effect several operations at once. We establish genuine Parish Councils all over the landward districts of Scotland; we place the administration of the Poor Law on a responsible elective basis; and by popularising the Poor Law Boards we secure that henceforward the District Councils should be wholly representative, because the delegates from the Poor Law Board will henceforward be delegates from a truly representative body.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER: Will they be called Parish Councils?

Sir G. TREVELYAN: I trust and hope that the House of Commons will be prepared to adopt the title of Parish Councils. That is not a point on which we should stand or fall, but just as we shall call the Board of Supervision henceforward the Local Government Board, I think we shall not shock any genuine Scottish feeling by calling the Parochial Boards Parish Councils. Now, there are 885 civil parishes in Scotland. I say nothing at present about the *quoad sacra* parishes, of which there are over 300, though later I shall have to make a proposal with regard to some of them. The Parochial Boards in these civil parishes are constituted in a manner familiar to all Scotsmen. In 10 burghal parishes—some of them great cities and some of them not larger than any ordinary parish—there is a comparatively small *ex officio* element; but in all the other parishes—that is to say, in 99 per cent. of them—the position of the Boards is most peculiar. They consist of a deputation from the kirk-session, and of all owners of land and houses over £20 a year, be they few or be they many—be they, as in some Highland parishes, only one or two, or, as in other cases, 300, 400, 500, and 600, even in one case over 2,000. These owners may delegate by mandate to their factors or other vicarious personages their own duties. Then there are a certain number of elected members, the number being settled by the Board of Supervision, but being not more in many cases than a 20th or 30th or 40th part of the Board, and even these electors are chosen by the plural vote and by voting papers, and in the burghal parishes on a high qualification. That in the rural districts of Scotland—for in the burghal parishes there is a small deputation from the Municipality—is a true description of a Parochial Board. It is, as I said, familiar to all Scotchmen, and it is beyond the power of any words of mine to exaggerate or intensify the disapprobation with which Scotchmen regard it. I say nothing of the efforts of private Members; I say nothing even of the efforts of my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division (Sir C. Cameron); but since 1871 five Bills have been brought in by Governments, both Liberal and Conservative, for the purpose of reforming the constitutions of the Parochial Boards. These proposals fell through, as I believe, because they did not go far enough and did not satisfy the people of Scotland, who did not care to change so much for the sake of getting so little. But now, from the experience of last Session, it is quite evident that public opinion in Parliament has shown, in the case of the English Bill, that it has come up to the mark which, as I believe, public opinion in Scotland stood for some time already. This Bill proposes that the Parochial Board, which we call the Parish Council, shall henceforward be entirely chosen by free and open popular election. The constituencies will in landward parishes and parts of parishes be the electors on the Register of the County Council, in burghal parishes and parts of parishes they will be the municipal electors. Now this, as hon. Members know, is the widest suffrage that exists. It includes the service franchise, the compound householder, the lodger, and likewise Peers and women. The number of Councillors will be fixed by the County Council; in landward parts by the Town Council; in burghal parts and in parishes partly landward and partly burghal by the County Council and the Town Council jointly; and failing agreement, the matter is to be referred to the Sheriff. The limit of the number of Parish Councillors that is proposed in the Bill is between six and 30. Considering the serious duties that will fall to the Parish Councils, less than six should nowhere be elected; and if 30 seems high, it must be remembered that in the Boards of Edinburgh and Glasgow this number is already exceeded. In the smaller parishes, the number of Councillors will probably be elected on a single list; but in all cases the County Council and Town Council will have the power of dividing the parish into wards for the purposes of election. This brings me to the main difficulty of the Bill, which I hope hon. Members will think has been successfully surmounted. This is a measure not only for the reform of Parochial Boards, but for the establishment of Parish Councils to manage other affairs of the community. But in burghs these affairs are already managed by the Municipality. The burghal parts of the parish must be united for the purposes of the Poor Law. They must, however, obviously be separated for general Parish Council purposes. Suppose the burghal part was to forbid the rural part to have a recreation ground, or the burghal part should refuse the rural part of the parish leave to take action in matters of public health or rights of way, then they would be deprived of the powers which every English rural parish has, and which every Scottish rural parish ought to have. But, on the other hand, it would be extremely unjust that the burghal part should be rated for a recreation ground which was only enjoyed by the rural part of the parish, when, perhaps, the town itself had its own recreation ground. We therefore lay it down that, where the parish is both landward and burghal, the landward portion shall constitute at least one separate ward or wards, which shall form a Parish Council for all purposes other than for the administration of the Poor Law. But it will be said—"What will you do with the landward portions of parishes which are too small to make a Parish Council?" The figure below which we cannot have a Parish Council in England is 100, and in the whole of Scotland there are, I believe, only four parishes in which the landward part falls below that figure; and I think my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrewshire represents two of them. It must be remembered that, under the wide provisions of the 51st section of the Act of 1889, it is the very easiest thing in the world to bring about the absorption of populations into a neighbouring rural parish, or into the burgh. This amount of population, which cannot be dealt with under this scheme—in all, not exceeding 200 people in the whole of Scotland—ought not to be allowed seriously to stand in the way of what I believe to be the only scheme practicable for giving Scotland the full benefit of what England has got, without turning topsy-turvy the whole system which Scotland has already

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of financial and local administration. Thus, we propose to popularise elections. But, as I know by experience, Scotland would thank us very little if we multiplied the number, increased the complication, and swelled the expense of elections. Knowing how strong this feeling is, and how just it is, we have taken measures for simplifying elections which I earnestly trust the House will consider favourably. In the first place, the electoral roll will be the same absolutely for county and burgh and parish elections. This will be a very great saving of labour to the assessors, and a saving of expense to the ratepayers. All that is necessary is that the county and burgh Registers should be so framed and printed that the electors may appear upon them according to parishes and parish wards; and I am informed that that may be done with the greatest ease. Here I may say a word about the women's vote. As a matter of course, women, if elected, will sit upon the Boards under a clause which makes Parish Councillors qualified by residence in or within three miles of the parish; if chosen as delegates by the Parish Council, they will sit on the District Committee; and we give the Parish Council franchise to married women living with their husbands, who have a separate qualification. This is essentially the same as the English law now is. We go on to propose that the election shall take place on one and the same day, and in one and the same place as the County Council and municipal elections. For that purpose we enact that in settling the wards for Parish Councils, County and Town Councils shall, as far as possible, take into consideration the existing districts and wards for municipal purposes, and the election of Parish Councillors shall take place as nearly as may be in the same manner, the same place, and by the same returning officers and clerks as the elections for Town and County Councillors. This brings me to the important question —For how long are the Councillors to be elected, and how are they to retire? In England the Parish Councillors retire in a body at the end of three years. Guardians do the same. But if the County Council wish it, one-third of the Guardians may go out every year. In Scotland we have three alternatives. In the first place, over all Scotland one-third may go out every year. I must say that there are very great objections to this proposal. It is very difficult in the case of such numerous bodies as the Parochial Boards to find what the general feeling is; but as far as I can gather, in smaller Boards there is a very strong feeling indeed against being put to the trouble of an annual election. Another point is that the Register of the County Council is only made up once in three years, and, therefore, if we retire one-third of the Parish Councillors every year, it will be necessary that the county should be put to the immense expense and trouble of having its roll made up every year. Then comes the alternative which, as a matter of fact, we have adopted in the Bill—namely, that in every parish in Scotland the Parish Councillors shall retire at the end of three years. I am not quite certain that objection will not be taken to this on the part of some of the largest urban Boards. In the year 1888 there was a Poor Law Conference which was attended by the representatives of 28 parishes in Scotland, beginning with the great Edinburgh and Glasgow parishes, and going down pretty well according to the size and dignity of the parishes. And one of the resolutions that were carried was that elected members should hold office for three years, one-third retiring annually. Now a third alternative would be that in counties in the landward parishes Councillors should be elected once in three years, and in the burghal parishes they should be elected one-third every year, retiring one-third. And this, of course, could be carried out very easily, because the municipal elections take place every year, and one-third of the Municipal Councillors retire; whereas in the case of the County Councillors the elections take place every third year, all the Councillors coming out together. Now we come to the powers to be given. These powers are largely contained in Clause 24 of the Bill. They include powers to provide or acquire buildings for public offices and meetings, and other public purposes; to provide and maintain grounds for public recreation, subject to the consent of the District Committee, or, where the county is not divided into districts, of the County Council; to acquire land for such buildings and recreation grounds; to acquire by agreement any right-of-way the acquisition of which is beneficial to the inhabitants of the parish; to hold and accept gifts of property for the benefit of the parish; to execute works incidental to any of the foregoing powers; to contribute to the expenses of doing anything above mentioned; to sell and exchange any lands or buildings; and to exercise all the powers of remonstrance and investigation and other matters relating to health which are at present enjoyed by householders or by ratepayers. For these purposes, and for the general purposes of this Act, the Parish Council may rate and borrow. In the English Bill there is a limit of 6d. in the £1—a limit arrived at in this House by the general agreement of English Members. I have my own doubts as to whether Scottish Members will have come to the same conclusion. In an ordinary rural parish in the lowlands of Scotland the whole parish rates, if you put education aside, very often do not exceed 6d. in the £1, and sometimes do not come near 6d. A 9d. rate would be a very high one in many rural districts. I am not at all sure that in Scotland very considerable consternation would not be created by the laying down in an Act of Parliament of the figure of 6d. as the rate up to which it was expected that the Parish Council should work. I am well inclined to leave the Parish Councils to their own common sense, which I believe will be their best guide, with regard to the objects they wish to attain, and the price they are ready to pay for them. With regard to borrowing, in the English Bill parishes are allowed to borrow up to one-half of their rateable value. From a Return I have had, I find that there are only some 25 parishes in Scotland which have borrowed, up to this time, more than one-tenth of their rateable value; and it would be, indeed, a jump if we gave a sort of inducement in an Act of Parliament so largely to increase the amount of debt in the parishes of Scotland which hitherto have been so free from it. The provision we have introduced is that the borrowing power of the Parish Councils for the general purposes of this Act shall be placed under the close and strict supervision and check of the Local Government Board; and wherever more than one-fifth of the rateable value has been borrowed they will have to get the leave of the Local Government Board to exceed that amount. I believe we may anticipate from this scheme great additions to the comfort and welfare of the people. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for North-East Manchester, asked me some time ago about recreation grounds and libraries, and what had been done to utilise the powers which Parliament has already put in the hands of Local Authorities? It is a very curious tale to tell. In Scotland a district committee is charged with providing recreation grounds. Now, there are two difficulties before this committee. In the first place, the district is so large that it cannot enjoy any given recreation ground. They are providing, not for themselves, but only for a portion of the community which they represent; and, in the next place, they cannot borrow money for this purpose. What is the result? Absolutely no recreation grounds have been provided throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): At the public expense.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: Quite so—at the public expense. I know that a great deal has been done by private benefaction. We make over this power to the Parish Council, which represents the community which desires and can utilise and enjoy the recreation ground, and the Parish Council can borrow in order to procure it. As to public libraries, they are now under the Parochial Boards, and the Parochial Boards have only set up four throughout the whole of Scotland. But freely elected Parish Councils, elected for the management of all the interests of the locality, instead of being a sort of *omnium gatherum* of all sorts of representative and pseudo-representative elements, chosen simply for the administration of the Poor Law, will be a very different body; and I earnestly hope, and firmly believe, that you will not merely have four, but 40, and perhaps hundreds of public libraries provided in the long run by the Parish Councils. I shall leave hon. Members to learn from the Bill the power which we propose to give to Parish Councils with regard to the provision of allotments, and the more speedy and efficacious procedure which I hope will make the Allotments Acts something of a reality instead of being, as they are at present, an absolute nullity in Scotland. There are provisions for meetings in schools for Local Bodies, and candidates for Local Bodies; powers of appointing committees for special purposes, and joint committees of parishes for objects which two or more parishes have in common; provisions for finance and audit. These and much else I pass over in order to devote a few minutes to the explanation of another portion of the Bill, which has no counterpart in the English measure. The Local Government Act of 1889 provided Scotland with machinery for local government, which we certainly do not think of pulling to pieces. That machinery had certain defects and omissions, and it is satisfactory that those defects and omissions have been discovered by those who work it, and that they are desirous of getting a remedy. I think it shows that the system has real life in it. The attention of the Scottish Office was called to certain points in which the system of county local government was defective by certain County Councillors, and I issued a Circular Letter to County Councillors asking them to point out defects which their experience had brought to their notice. The matter was courteously and promptly taken up, and not only did I receive a quantity of very valuable memoranda from the separate Councils, but a most important Conference was held on the 24th of January, which was attended by the representatives of 28 County Councils. That Conference was quite a model in the promptness with which they got through a large amount of business. The Government has introduced into this measure a series of amendments of the present system of county administration, most of which I think I can count on to receive the acceptance of the House. Some of the proposals made in the Conference I have not adopted, because they would demand not only an Act, but almost a code to themselves. I specially refer to everything that bears upon altering the incidence of rating, which are necessarily of such a controversial character that I am quite satisfied they would, if introduced, wreck the Bill. The first of the changes proposed has been anticipated by my hon. Friend opposite, the Member for Renfrewshire, in a Bill which he has introduced, and which has already got very far in its passage. We propose that County Councils should be able to pay a reasonable sum to the funds of an Association of County Councils—a power which now exists in England. I am bound to say that my idea of a reasonable sum was more timid than that of my hon. Friend. Unless my hon. Friend's Bill has become law by the time we come to this point in Committee, he will see that his proposals are embodied in our Bill. We propose that the chairman of the District Council shall, by virtue of his office, be a Justice of the Peace for the county; and that nominations for County Council elections may be withdrawn by consent, in order to obviate the trouble and expense of a contest. The County Councils may erect and maintain county buildings. Then—and this is a most important provision, and one which will extremely affect the interests of the Highland counties—instead of being confined to the expensive and elaborate roads by way of communication, they may make cart-roads, footpaths, and footbridges, which will enable the road rate to be used for the benefit of portions of Scotland which at present get no benefit from it at all. The District Committee, and, failing the District Committee, the County Council, are charged with vindicating rights-of-way by public exertions, and, if necessary, at the public expense. In the Highlands the ferries have fallen out of public care ever since the Act of 1889, and we propose to give the charge and supervision of ferries to the County Council, and enable them to take over altogether those ferries which the proprietors are willing to make over to them. I am glad to say that this part of the Bill has been drawn by a Highland proprietor with the greatest knowledge of that part of the country where these ferries are most needed and there is the greatest danger of decadence. County boundaries are to be assimilated for valuation, and for the distribution of money under the local taxation and other grants; and the by-laws dealing with vagrants are to be defined, and the powers of the County Councils to deal with vagrants assured. The powers of borrowing for capital works, widening of roads, and other purposes is conferred on the County Council; and the time for the repayment of loans extended from 30 to 40 years. The land which is required for all and any of these purposes, whether by County or Parish Councils, if it cannot be had by agreement, may be henceforward obtained under provisions for compulsory purchase—which we believe will be quite as effectual and quite as cheap as they can possibly be made. On one point only, so far as I can remember, we have gone against the majority at the County Conference. By a majority of 22 to 16, the Conference decided not to interfere with the composition of the Standing Joint Committee. We propose to ask Parliament to enact that the representation of the Commissioners of Supply on the Standing Joint Committee shall cease — and that the Police Committee shall be entirely composed of County Councillors, along with the Sheriff or Sheriff Substitute. The powers and duties of the Standing Joint Committee relating to capital works and borrowing we propose to transfer to the Finance Committee of the County Council —a body which, under the 75th section of the Local Government Act, has a statutory recognition and a corporate existence quite as marked and real as the Standing Joint Committee itself. I end my selections from the provisions of the Bill with perhaps the most—I am beginning to hope almost the only —very controversial one; and I do not argue it now. Sir, this Bill is founded on the existing civil parishes in Scotland. Undoubtedly these parishes are in some cases inconveniently situated and bounded. But already there exists a remedy for this. Under the Poor Law Act of 1845, on the application of any of the Parochial Boards interested, parishes may be combined for the purposes of the Poor Law; and under the 51st section of the Act of 1889—a section to which the attention of the country has not been nearly sufficiently directed—on the representation of a County or Town Council, the Secretary for Scotland has the largest, the widest—I was going to say the most arbitrary power—for uniting, and dividing, and re-grouping parishes and parts of parishes. There is one class of parishes to which these powers might be most usefully applied, and that is the *quoad sacra* parish, which likewise is a School Board district, and which is composed of parts of several other parishes. There are 53 such parishes and School Board districts, made up out of portions of 101 civil parishes. Now it is almost certain that where a *quoad sacra* parish has been chosen as a School Board district, it is a self-contained community, with a life of its own, and could with great advantage be endowed with a corporate existence, and would be able to exercise for itself all the powers given to Parish Councils under this Bill. The Bill, therefore, enacts that the County and Town Council shall take into consideration the case, and determine whether the *quoad sacra* parish shall be converted into a civil parish, which, therefore, would *ipso facto* become conterminous with the School Board district, a matter which in itself is a great advantage. It only remains for me to say a word about a question which last Session provided fuel for so many hot debates—the question of charities. I hope and believe our discussions on this question will be much less prolonged and much quieter. In the first place, this matter has been largely arranged already. By the 53rd section of the Poor Law Act, the funds which have been left for the benefit of the legal poor of Scotland have already been made over to the Parochial Boards, and, therefore, under this Bill will pass quite naturally to the Parish Council. Of such funds there were in Scotland, as ascertained in 1869, nearly 200, some of them of very large value—£1,000, £2,000, and £3,000 —and since then a certain number of others have been ascertained and vested in the Parochial Boards. All these are now managed by the Parochial Boards, and all these under the Bill will pass to the Parish Council; but, besides, there is a large number of charities, non-ecclesiastical in their character, vested for the most part in the kirk-session, and with trustees in some cases. Of these non-ecclesiastical charities the commonest form is providing money, coal, and beds in the hospital to the poor of all denominations, for apprenticing boys and educating deserving young children, irrespective altogether of the Church to which they belong. In these cases the existing trustees, whether they be of the kirk-session or not, will have the power if they think fit to transfer the trust to the Parish Council; but if they do not take this step, various provisions will come into effect to give the Parish Council a strong hold on these charities. The best known proposal in the English Bill is not suited to Scotland—the proposal, namely, which enacts that the Charity Commissioners shall place trustees upon the Board in order to take part in the deliberations, and possibly a preponderating part, with the old trustees. But in Scotland, where the kirk-session or the heritors, and, still more, where the kirk-session and the heritors, are trustees, to add a majority of trustees would make the Board ponderous and numerous to absurdity, and in the next place we have no Charity Commission in Scotland. We propose, therefore, that in these cases the Local Government Board for Scotland shall make a scheme nominating a new Board of Trustees of a convenient size from the existing trustees and from the trustees appointed by the Parish Council, taking care, in the case of a non-ecclesiastical charity—and these are the only charities which will be dealt with—to give a majority of the nominees to the Parish Council. This is our practical and simple method of dealing with what, I believe, the Scottish people consider a practical and simple matter, unless, indeed, the Scottish Members go further, and take the advice of a very powerful body of Members in this House, not at all belonging to one Party, and make over these charities bodily to the Parish Councils. I have endeavoured to give the House a compact sketch of a large measure, and I think I have said enough to show that we have fulfilled our promise; and while Scotland gets everything that England has got, while nothing has been withheld, a good deal more has been given, or, at any rate, has been offered. In conclusion, I would only ask hon. Members to read the Bill as favourably as possible, and, at any rate, to read it very carefully, and not hasten to condemn any single provision until they have thought it over thoroughly in connection with the other parts of the measure which surround it. A detail which at first sight may strike an hon. Member unfavourably may be absolutely necessary for the purpose of carrying out a general scheme of which, on the whole, he approves. And again, it must be remembered that the Bill, as it enters the House, will not be the same as the Act which I hope and trust will leave the House. The framers of the measure readily admit that it is susceptible of improvement from the experience and acuteness of hon. Members, and from the knowledge which they possess, and of which they are kept constantly in possession by the constituencies which they represent. But none the less do we believe it to be sound and solid in its framework, and practical in its main detail, and with the help and co-operation of all concerned, we hope to bring it into such a shape that it may establish throughout Scotland popular responsible self-government in those quarters where and with regard to those objects for which it is at present wanted.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish a Local Government Board for Scotland, and make further provision for Local Government in Scotland."—(*Sir G. Trevelyan.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I have only one or two observations to make on the Bill, but I rise at present mainly to make a suggestion to the Government. It is clear, after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, a speech of great clearness and lucidity, that except by arrangement it is impossible that the First Reading can be taken to-night. There are certain advantages from the Scottish point of view in getting the First Reading to-night, because it is desirable to get the Bill printed, and that it should be referred to the County Councils of Scotland, that they may have a full opportunity of discussing it before we come to the Second Reading. If this is conceded by the Government, I should advise hon. Gentlemen to refrain from comments until the later stage, provided that the Government undertake to give at least a full night's Debate after the County Councils have discussed the Bill, and after hon. Members have had an opportunity of weighing the opinions expressed by those bodies. The County Councils do not meet till next month practically, and therefore it will be impossible to take the Second Reading before the Whitsuntide Holidays. If the Government do not see their way to that, they cannot complain of our discussing the principles and even the details of the Bill at this stage. But there are two points of great importance raised by the Bill which even on the First Reading I should not like to pass without a word being said from this Bench regarding them. The first is the subject of borrowing by Parish Councils. The right hon. Gentleman, with the example of the English Bill before him, has decided that there shall be no limit put to the expenditure of the Parochial Councils, and practically no rigid limit to their borrowing. In justification of that departure from the English precedent, he says that Scotsmen are so naturally economical, and have shown themselves in the past so reluctant to burden the rates by unnecessary expenditure, that to put any limit of 6d. for expenditure and a limit of half the rate for borrowing purposes, as is done in the English Bill, would be something like a legislative invitation to the Scottish Authorities to raise rates and indulge in expenditure which they would otherwise be loth to undertake. I am not satisfied with that. Recollect that you cannot argue of the future of these Bodies from the past of the Bodies you are dispossessing. There may be and are anomalies in the existing Constitution of the Parochial Boards, but at all events they do represent in overwhelming force the opinion of the people who have to pay the rates, and naturally enough they were extremely economical of the rates they themselves had to pay. One object of this Bill is to transfer the power not only to a class who do not in some cases pay the rates, but you are also giving powers to carry out objects which those classes will be specially anxious for. One consequence of that will be that there will be a pressure in the direction of expenditure, and the removal of ancient obstacles to expenditure, which may make the future of these Parochial Bodies very different in this respect from their past. I think it a most rash piece of inductive reasoning to suppose that because the old Parochial Board, as it was constituted, had proved a most economical administrator, the new Parish Council, elected on an entirely different line, and having entirely different relations with the ratepaying class, will carry on the financial traditions of its predecessors. I do not feel myself justified in giving a final judgment on this matter, but I confess I do regard it with apprehension, and I trust that those who discuss this matter will see fit to make the legislation in regard to Scotland run in this respect more absolutely on all fours with the legislation which the Scottish Members have aided in imposing upon England. The only other point I wish to speak on at present is the abolition of the Standing Joint Committee. I do not complain of the Government taking the opportunity of introducing this Bill to settle some much-needed reform in the Act of 1889. But, under the inspiration of some form of legislative insanity, the Government have deliberately imported into a Bill, which in other respects they have striven to make uncontroversial, this most controversial matter. If you are going to introduce this reform into Scotland by means of the Parish Councils Bill, why, when you were dealing with England, did you not introduce it into the English Bill? That is my first objection; but there are other objections of the gravest substance to this proposal. It entirely destroys the financial machinery of the County Councils, deliberately adopted by Parliament in 1889; and not content with that, it entirely destroys the machinery by which—through the police—the law is administered, and the liberty and peace of Her Majesty's subjects preserved. I must, at this very first moment, enter my protest against it. I was a Member of the Government which introduced the original proposal, and I was largely responsible for it, but I believe it to have been founded on justice and equity, and I do not think it was open to the charge of being an interference with the liberties or rights of any popular body. Then, with regard to the financial authority of this joint committee, what is it? It has no control over the annual expenditure, or over the annual taxation for the purposes of expenditure. What it has is a control over the borrowing powers of the county; and when we recollect that the County Council is elected by a constituency on whom the burden of meeting these permanent liabilities will not in the main fall, and that it will give to those on whom it will not fall a much greater voice in the matter, is it not a very strong order that, without justification, without the slightest defence given by the Minister in charge of the Bill, he should make this far-reaching alteration in a Bill adopted by Parliament after long and full discussion? That was the financial part; but the police part of the proposal appears to me even more important. There are parts of Scotland where it cannot be said that there is absolute unanimity among all classes, as happily is the case in many parts of Scotland, to see the laws enforced and supported by the forces which this House had placed at the disposal of the Local Authorities; and yet you are here handing the power to a body elected by those who may not want to see the law enforced against certain kinds of offences, and you are placing the unfortunate Sheriff of the County, who is responsible for keeping order, in a minority of one, it may be, in the Police Committee, which is to have absolute control over the whole machinery by which he is to carry out the duties of his office.

Cases have arisen even under the existing system where you have some qualification of the character of this Police Committee, and where it has been found impossible for the Sheriff to obtain the necessary police force to enforce the law. With that example fresh in your minds, how can the Government bring down to this House a proposal which has nothing whatever to do with the main objects of the Bill, which is foisted in artificially, and which is not covered by the title of the Bill, as far as we have heard the title? How can they make that provision with that instance fresh in their minds of the difficulty of officers carrying out the law under the existing system? Here, then, are two gigantic subjects with which the Government have deliberately determined to embitter and lengthen our Debates. Why are they not content to deal with Parish Councils in an uncontroversial manner, in doing what every Scotsman wants to see done, without running their heads against this stone wall, and compelling us—who would certainly approach the consideration of this Bill in other respects with the most favourable feelings, and with a desire to see this question settled effectually and quickly—to receive this part of the Bill with protest and warning? I trust that even now the Government will see fit to alter their policy, and I confess I think they would have been more honest and more straightforward with the House if they had told us, in the course of the four days' discussion upon this Standing Grand Committee, that the Bill they were going to refer to it was not a Parish Councils Bill, was not the uncontroversial measure which they have pretended that it was—but that it contains proposals for modifying profoundly the original arrangements of Parliament with regard to County Councils, and that it contains subjects on which sharp divisions must make themselves felt. This is not an uncontroversial measure. It might have been had the Government so willed it. I think they ought to have told us its character before they asked us to assent to that Grand Committee; but as they have conceded it for obvious reasons, at all events they must now take the consequences. I hope they will give us ample opportunity for discussing not only the merits of the Bill, but the propriety of sending it to the Committee with such proposals, which from their nature ought to be discussed and decided in Committee of the whole House. I am not making an unreasonable demand also when I ask that we shall have ample time after Whitsuntide to consider the Bill on its own merits and in connection with the opinion of the various County Councils.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not understand why the right hon. Gentleman, who has addressed to the House some very forcible animadversions and criticisms, as to which I have no complaint to make, should have expressed himself as surprised at finding these provisions in the Bill. When the Local Government (Scotland) Bill of 1889 was before the House, these points were debated, and the right hon. Gentleman must remember that the Liberal Party protested in the strongest possible terms against the constitution and the powers given to the Joint Committee. The Liberal Party from the first opposed the existing arrangement in the strongest possible terms, for the very reason that they had no sympathy with the arguments that the right hon. Gentleman has urged. We, unlike him, believe that the best thing, in the interests of law and order, is to entrust the electors with a much larger power over the police and the machinery of order. I am not going to enter into that controversy now. I am only surprised at the right hon. Gentleman being astonished to find such provisions in this Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What I am astonished at is to find such provisions in a Parish Councils Bill; and, in the second place, that they are introduced in a Bill that is not a controversial one.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, this was not a Parish Councils Bill; this was a Local Government (Scotland) Bill, and, therefore, Parish Councils came legitimately into it. He acknowledged the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman proposed that, in the circumstances, they might be allowed to introduce the Bill to-day, and take the Second Reading after Whitsuntide. He imagined it would not be an extreme undertaking for him to say that the Government would not bring the Second Reading on until after Whitsuntide, and promise a full night for the discussion. He hoped, if they made that concession, that that night would see the end of the discussion on the Second Reading, and the reference to the Committee.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, it was impossible for him to give any pledge that the Debate would only take one night. From his own point of view, speaking at this time, that would be sufficient. There would be no desire on their part to prolong the Debate.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, it must be understood that this one night's Debate included the reference to the Standing Committee.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY (Buteshire) said, that as a Scottish Member he did not think any such promise could be given. It might be that the exigencies of private business would reduce the time at their disposal. He referred to one or two important points, such as the reconstruction of the Board of Supervision, the desirability of a continuity of policy in the administration of the Poor Laws, and the question of a no-limit rate, all of which would require careful consideration.

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire) inquired if provision was made in the Bill for the payment of travelling expenses of County Councillors?

Sir G. TREVELYAN said, there was no such provision.

Dr. MACGREGOR: Then I beg to give notice that I shall move an Amendment to that effect.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, he understood that the Leader of the Opposition, though he did not promise positively, saw no reason why the Second Reading of the Bill and its reference to the Standing Committee should occupy more than one night, and that he was prepared to do his best to secure the attainment of these two objects. On that understanding the Government were quite ready to defer the Second Reading till after Whitsuntide.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he entirely accepted the right hon. Gentleman's version of his position. He could not himself imagine that it would be necessary to give more than a full night to the Second Reading, unless some entirely new phase of controversy arose in consequence of the discussion of the Bill in Scotland.

Mr. PARKER SMITH said, that in regard to the Standing Joint Committees, they were a necessary protection. There were counties in which the existence of these Committees as a possible safeguard had been of very great importance during the last few years. He was sorry that education was not included in the Bill, and a single Board established in the parishes which would not only have the functions of the Parochial Board, but have the functions of the School Board as well.

Mr. RENSHAW thought that in the smaller rural parishes the School Board and the Parochial Board might be united. There might also be introduced some limitation of borrowing powers of Parish Councils.

Mr. D. CRAWFORD also regretted that no attempt had been made to amalgamate the functions of the School Board with those of the Parish Council in the smaller parishes.

Sir G. TREVELYAN said, he should have to say a good deal about education when the time came. He had no objection to a limit of borrowing power of any sort or kind; but he doubted whether the Scottish people would not be rather alarmed at it.

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir G. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, and The Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 202.]

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT (COUNTY OF BUTE) BILL.—(No. 142.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir C. Cameron.*)

Sir C. PEARSON (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities) said, this Bill should not have been introduced by a private Member, and he would like to know from hon. Members who were responsible for the Bill what they considered brought the Islands of Bute and Arran within the scope of the Act?

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 4) BILL. (No. 140.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 1) BILL.—(No. 150.)

As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS (LONDON) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 4.

Amendments made.

Another amendment proposed, in page 3, line 30, after the word "served," to insert the words "The Order shall not require to be confirmed by Act of Parliament."—(*Mr. A. C. Morton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

It being after Ten Minutes to Seven of the Clock, and Objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added the following Fifteen Members to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, in respect of the Building Societies (No. 2) Bill: Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Banbury, Mr. Benn, Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Bucknill, Dr. Clark, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Thomas Healy, Mr. Lees Knowles, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Pickersgill, and Mr. George Russell.

Report to lie upon the Table.

CANAL RATES, TOLLS, AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 2) (BRIDGWATER, &C. CANALS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade, under "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," containing the Classification of Merchandise Traffic and the Schedule of Maximum Rates, Tolls, and Charges applicable thereto, for the Bridgwater Canals Undertaking of the Manchester Ship Canal Company and for certain other Canals, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burt and Mr. Mundella.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 198.]

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Rees Davies, Bill to amend the Law as to Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Rees Davies, Mr. Albert Bright, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Arch, Mr. Husband, and Mr. Joseph Pease.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 199.]

STEAM TRAWLERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Crombie, Bill to compel the Masters of Steam Trawlers fishing in Scotland to hold certificates of competency, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crombie, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Renshaw, and Sir William Wedderburn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 200.]

MINES, ROYALTIES, AND EASEMENTS.

On Motion of Mr. Atherley-Jones, Bill to amend the Law relating to Royalties and Mining Easements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Sir James Joicey, Mr. John Wilson, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Joseph Pease, and Mr. Pickard.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 201.]

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILLS, &C.

Lords Message [26th April] relating to the Joint Committee on Statute Law Revision Bills, &c., considered.

Ordered, That the Committee appointed by this House to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords on Statute Law Revision Bills and Consolidation Bills do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room B, upon Monday next, at Twelve of the Clock, as proposed by their Lordships.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*Mr. T. E. Ellis.*)

The House Suspended its Sitting at Seven of the Clock.

EVENING SITTING.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1886.

RESOLUTION.

SIR D. MACFARLANE (Argyll), who had given notice of his intention to call attention to the necessity for amending and extending the Crofters (Scotland) Act of 1886; and to move,

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Crofters (Scotland) Act of 1886 be amended so as to include leaseholders; to increase and make effective the power to enlarge existing holdings; and to provide that a person who, in the opinion of the Commissioners, is substantially a crofter and who is resident in the crofting parish in which his holding is situated, shall not necessarily be excluded from the benefits of the Act because he does not reside on his holding,"

said, he understood that a technical question had arisen with reference to the first part of the Resolution, inasmuch as it contained a recommendation which was included in a Bill that had been read a first time. If under these circumstances it was out of Order for him to move the first part of his Motion, he would leave it out and move only the second part.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I think that the part which relates to the inclusion of leaseholders will not be in Order, as it anticipates a Bill now before the House.

Sir D. MACFARLANE said, he would, then, leave that out, and he could do so without difficulty, because the Government had already accepted the principle of the Bill. The question he had therefore to discuss was limited to two points. The first related to the enlargement of existing holdings. There was a clause in the Crofters Act of 1886 providing for the enlargement of holdings, but he thought the House would not be surprised to learn that that clause was so restricted that practically it had been a dead letter. As far as he could make out from the Report of the Crofters Commission of 1892, in the eight years since that Act was passed only 44 holdings had been enlarged under the permissive clause of the Bill. It was obvious, therefore, that it had not fulfilled the purpose for which it was intended. The Motion did not, of course, refer to a Report which would be received shortly from the Deer Forest Commission, but it was evident that the restrictions now in force would practically make it impossible for the Commissioners to enlarge the holdings to any extent. The Crofters Act would have to have been a much better Act than it was if it had not been necessary, after the lapse of time that had taken place since its passage, to put it into dock for alteration and repair. It had been found to be a very weak measure. He remembered that during the discussions that took place when the Bill was before the House in 1886 he ventured to predict that it would not answer the purpose it was intended for sufficiently to satisfy the just demands of the people of the Highlands. But while he said that this prophecy had unfortunately been fulfilled, he must admit in all truth and honesty that the Act had done more for the Highland people than he ever expected. The one great thing it had done which could not be undone was to place upon the Statute Book the recognition of the principle that the native population—what he might call the aborigines of the Highlands—had rights in the land as well as the landlords. It was impossible to over-estimate the value of the recognition of that principle. The Act had effected a reduction of rents from 30 to 60 per cent., and it had also struck off a number of arrears that hung round the necks of the crofters, and made the struggle for life impossible. But, at the same time, defects in the Act had been made plain, and it was the manifest duty of the House to remedy those defects if it could be shown to be just and reasonable that they should be remedied. He was convinced that it was just and reasonable that the holdings should be enlarged, and he was also convinced that the restrictive clause, which defined what was and what was not a crofter, should be amended. He should be afraid to say how many letters, petitions, and papers he had received on the subject of this restrictive clause. The Commissioners had decided that men who were *bonâ fide* holders of crofts, but happened to live in little hamlets which had the crofts all round them, were not crofters. The result had been the exclusion from the benefits of the Act of a very large number of people whom the Act was originally intended to include. There were many other Amendments of the Act which might be recommended to the House as necessary; but he desired to approach the subject with the utmost moderation, and in a practical spirit, and he proposed only that which he believed he should be likely to succeed in carrying. He had left out a very large class of deserving people in the Highlands, but he was waiting hopefully for the Report of the Deer Forest Commission, when he trusted that a sufficient amount of land would be found to be available in the Highlands to provide land for all who needed it. Two small Acts of Parliament were passed by the late Government which were supplementary to the Crofters Act, but extended over a wider area—namely, the Small Holdings Act and the Allotments Act. He said nothing about the motives of the late Government in passing those measures, but certainly if they had been designed to prevent the acquisition of small holdings and allotments they could not have been better framed for the purpose. County Council after County Council had refused to put them in force because of the intolerable restrictions contained in them. He was anxious that the discussion should not occupy more time than was absolutely necessary, and he would therefore do no more than appeal to the House on behalf of a deserving humble people, who, if they had been less law-abiding and less deserving, would have had their grievances redressed many a year ago. They had been an uncomplaining people, although they had suffered under landlord tyranny to an extent that the House was not fully aware of. The principle of the Crofters Act, recognising as it did the interest of crofters in the land, was invaluable, not merely as a means of obtaining a reduction of the rents they paid, but as a means of constituting them free men who were not afraid of eviction at every glance of the landlord's factor. They asked respectfully, lawfully, and humbly that as much justice should be done to them as had been done to their fellow-subjects across the water in Ireland. There were no restrictions as to leaseholders or as to those who did not actually live upon their crofts. The present legal definition of a crofter was absurd, unjust, and unreasonable. He appealed to hon. Members, far removed as they were from all knowledge of the misery of these people, to try and do something that would ameliorate their condition. He had been in a great many parts of the world, including countries like Turkey, that were called benighted, and he declared there, before the House, that he had never seen a civilised people that were condemned to live the life that many of these poor Highlanders had been reduced to. It was a scandal and a shame that such things should be. He was quite sure that an appeal of this kind would not be heard with deaf ears by the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan), and that he had in this matter, as in all others affecting the welfare of the people, the full sympathy of the right hon. Gentleman. He moved the Resolution with the alteration that he had already indicated.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.), in seconding the Resolution, congratulated his hon. Friend on having obtained the opportunity of bringing it before the House. It was very appropriate that his hon. Friend should be the Member to bring it forward, because many Members would remember the active and energetic aid the hon. Member had given to his constituents and to the Highlanders generally in passing the Crofters Bill through the House. He (Dr. Farquharson) could also congratulate the Secretary for Scotland (Sir G. Trevelyan), whose name would be always in Scotland honourably associated with the passing of the Crofters Act, on having had the opportunity afforded to him of completing the work he so well began a few years ago. He quite agreed with his hon. Friend that the Crofters Act had been a great success in Scotland. Only the other day emphatic testimony was given of the improvements that had been made by the Crofters Act in the parts of Scotland to which it had been applied — how it had given the stimulus of hope to the poor and suffering people, and such security of tenure, and such fair rents as enabled them to carry on their methods of agriculture with a greater prospect of success than before. His hon. Friend had, however, well pointed out that, good as the Act was in many respects, it still required amendment. He concurred with his hon. Friend in hoping that the results of the labours of those Commissioners who were now conducting very laborious investigations throughout Scotland would be to enable the Crofters Commission to carry out further good work, and to enable the Highlanders to obtain that greater amount of land which they so urgently required. He was bound to say that his interest in the question was a little wider than the scope of the Resolution which his hon. Friend had proposed. He had always wondered why the Crofters Act had not been a little more widely extended, and that other parts of the country had not been brought within its scope. He could not help feeling a shade of disappointment that his hon. Friend had not made his Motion as wide as was its Preamble. He hoped to see an extension of the Crofters Act to other parts of Scotland besides those to which it was now applicable, and he was glad to see the Amendment which the hon. Member for East Aberdeenshire (Mr. Buchanan) had placed upon the Paper. Aberdeenshire was essentially a crofting county, and it actually contained a larger number of small holdings than any other county in Scotland. At this moment there were in Aberdeenshire over 8,000 holdings of less than £50 annual rent, and 6,000 of them were of less than £20 annual rent. These holdings had great claims to be included under an Act which would give fixity of tenure and fair rent. They were small, and very many of them were held upon conditions under which the holders might at any moment be forcibly dispossessed without having any claim to compensation. Very many of the holders had pasture in common, and they were also under other conditions which ought to bring them within the provisions of the Crofters Act. There was no county in Scotland in which the demand for the extension of the Crofters Act to itself was so keen, so strong, and so universal as Aberdeenshire. He thought the Aberdeenshire farmers felt that the large number of small holdings in that county had been the making of their farming industry, and that they had been the means of building up the great prosperity of the county as an agricultural centre, and, above all, as a great cattle-feeding and breeding county. The fact was, that the small farms had fed the large, and, between the two, Aberdeenshire had been erected into what he might call the premier county in Scotland for cattle-feeding, if not for cattle-breeding. The county had been enabled to hold its own better during the present depression of agriculture than any other part of Scotland. It was perhaps not unnatural that, under these circumstances, the Aberdeenshire farmers were casting wistful eyes upon the advantages which the Highlanders derived from the Crofters Act. He thought that if there could be an extension of the Crofters Act in these parts of Scotland it would be of enormous advantage. It would check the present tendency to abolish crofts and small holdings—the landlords being anxious to avoid keeping up the buildings on them; it would keep the people on the soil, and would operate in some degree as a remedy for the prevailing agricultural depression, as it would induce the tenants to put their capital into the soil. He most cordially seconded the Motion of his hon. Friend.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words—

> "In the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Crofters (Scotland) Act of 1886 be amended so as to increase and make effective the power to enlarge existing holdings, and to provide that a person who, in the opinion of the Commissioners, is substantially a crofter, and who is resident in the crofting parish in which his holding is situated, shall not necessarily be excluded from the benefits of the Act because he does not reside on his holding,"—(*Sir D. Macfarlane,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, that the hon. Member had been obliged to leave out of his Amendment that part of it which applied to leaseholders, but he might say that his opinion on that question was well known. As to the second part of the Amendment, in 1888 he had the honour of calling the attention of the House to the great disappointment that was experienced in regard to the operation of the provisions of the Act for enlarging the holdings of the crofters. The Government of that day were pleased to grant a special Return by the Crofters Commission to show the reasons why the Act had failed in that respect; and as soon as that Return was laid on the Table of the House, it became evident that there must be some remedy for the existing state of things. Little had been done up to that time. There were 24,000 crofters, so far as the Government knew, in the crofting counties of Scotland. The net result of applications for the enlargement of holdings had been that 57 had been carried into effect, to the advantage of 844 applicants. No less than 444 were in one county—Sutherlandshire.

DR. CLARK: And one is the Duke.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: And one was the Duke. That made 443. In that district the matter had been carried through largely by agreement, but in other counties comparatively few applications had been made and brought to a successful result. He earnestly trusted that Parliament would soon have an opportunity of dealing with this matter. Up to the present enlargement was only competent when five or more crofters applied. He thought that an individual crofter ought to be allowed to apply. Under Section 13, Sub-section 5, of the Act it was not competent for the Crofters

Commission to grant an application for enlargement of crofts if it would have the effect of raising the annual value of the holding to a higher amount than £15. It was not competent to the Crofters Commission to raise the annual value of the holdings to a higher figure than £15 each. His opinion was that the figure of £15 ought to be raised to that of £30 as the amount of rental which a crofter could pay without losing the benefits of the Act. Then it ought seriously to be considered whether the limit of £100 rental, below which no land could be taken from a farm for the purpose of enlarging crofters' holdings, ought not to be reconsidered. Rents had fallen in the Highlands from the same causes as in other parts, and a rent of £100 for a mountain farm was a high standard below which land might not be taken for enlarging crofters' holdings. In the next place, Section 22 of the Act ought undoubtedly to be repealed, and the powers which the Commission had for the purpose of enlarging crofters' holdings ought to be made permanent powers, not depending on the willingness of Parliament to prolong them from year to year. Besides that, the provisions about the continuity of crofts ought to be carefully reconsidered. It was with the object of preparing the ground for legislation on this important question that they had appointed what was generally called the Deer Forests Commission. He had come down provided with an account of the work the Commission had been doing, and he had reason to believe that the complete survey of the Highlands that was wanted in order to found upon it a satisfactory measure for the enlargement of crofters' holdings would be concluded within a reasonable time. Now he came to the third part of his hon. Friend's Motion—

> "To provide that a person who, in the opinion of the Commissioners, is substantially a crofter and who is resident in the crofting parish in which his holding is situated, shall not necessarily be excluded from the benefits of the Act because he does not reside on his holding."

These were very important words in the opinion of the Commissioners, and he did not believe the Commissioners ever extended the benefits of the Act to a person that was not actually a crofter, if he lived in a crofting parish; and he did not see why he should be debarred from the benefits of the Act because he resided in a crofting village, though his actual dwelling was not on the croft itself. If he fulfilled the conditions of the crofter, if the improvements had been made by himself or his predecessors in title if he resided on a pasture, he was a crofter to all intents and purposes. He was very much gratified with what his hon. Friend had said about the operations of the Crofters Act. They referred to hon. Gentlemen opposite and to the advantages Irish Members had got in their turn; they referred to the advantages the crofters had obtained, and he was bound to say not without some reason. He found that since the Act had been in operation, in no less than 14,000 holdings out of a gross total of 24,000 the rents had been reduced from £73,000 a year to £52,000 a year; that was to say, there had been an average reduction of 29 per cent., and, what would be regarded in Ireland as an enviable advantage, the arrears, which amounted to £180,000, had been cancelled until only 32 per cent. had actually to be paid. The effect of the Act had certainly been in every respect equal to everything that his hon. Friend described. In certain respects the crofters and their descendants had been encouraged, and he was told that interference by the factor—interference of a vexatious sort—was a thing scarcely known. From a letter sent to him recently, it appeared that a most excellent Judge said the effect of the Act had been that in the majority of cases the crofter took a greater interest in his holding, and had made improvements and used better methods of cultivation. Among other things, the system of the rotation of crops had been more widely adopted than formerly. The administration of the Act had had a large educational effect, including the adoption of important suggestions for improved methods of farming. As to improvements in buildings, it was beyond all doubt that a very large number of new dwelling-houses and steadings had been erected at the crofters' expense since the passing of the Act. This fact had certainly forced itself even on such cursory observation as he had been able to make, and a friend of his connected with this movement, from the point of view of a promoter of the movement by agitation, had informed him that he had been in every part of the Highlands, and he knew no part in the crofting counties in which much better houses had not been built in place of the bad ones, and he ventured to say that in many places in the Highlands, from being almost worse than the Irish cabins, had become equal to the best cottages in Northumberland and the North of England. To-day he had had sent him a telegram from Argyllshire, which, however, was somewhat marred in the sending—

> "The Medical Officer for the County of Argyll has reported on the general condition of Argyll; he has reported to the County Council showing great improvements have been carried out in the dwelling-houses on the island."

—he (Sir G. Trevelyan) thought it must be the Island of Tiree—

> "During the past three years about 30 houses have been entirely rebuilt. This has been voluntarily done by the crofters on the security which is afforded by the Act."

When the Act had produced such great advantages, including among them a regular and cheerful payment of rent, he was sure the House would only be too glad to agree with the Government in extending the Act as far as his hon. Friend proposed by his Motion.

MR. BUCHANAN (Aberdeenshire, E.) said, he was sure his hon. Friend the Member for Argyllshire (Sir D. Macfarlane) must have heard with satisfaction the speech just delivered, and all Scotch Ministers would agree with him in satisfaction at the acknowledgment given by his right hon. Friend to the various Amendments which the Government promised to support. The right hon. Gentleman had shown most clearly what an immense boon and advantage the Crofters Act had been during the eight years it had been in operation in that part of Scotland to which it was extended. But he had heard his right hon. Friend in one respect speak with a certain sense of disappointment, for he did not allude to the proposals made by the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) for an extension of the Act to those parts of Scotland to which the Act did not now apply. During the progress of the Bill through the House, before it became an Act, it was urged on the Government of the day that the Act should not be arbitrarily limited to one geographical portion of the country, but that it should be made applicable to all crofting tenants, no matter where they were. Scottish Members representing crofter constituencies claimed that those who held under substantially similar tenure in other parts of Scotland should have applied to their crofts precisely similar legislative remedies. That was the claim they made, and urged on the consideration of the House and the Government, and he was sure his hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) would agree with him in asserting that there was no subject that demanded greater attention and consideration. There was a strong feeling in the North-Eastern Counties, not confined to one political Party, that at all events a similar measure should be passed for crofters whose position was similar to that of the crofters as defined by the present Act. The crofter in the North-East of Scotland, like the other crofters, had a claim on the soil from his ancestors. He had built the house in which he lived, and he had made the improvements in the holding. They had just the same reason as the crofters in the North and West for their rent not being raised on their own improvements. The crofters in the North-East had also suffered from insecurity of their tenure, and been capriciously dismissed from their holdings. Sometimes it was in order, no doubt, to carry out some great agricultural improvement. A crofter had brought a bit of hillside into cultivation, another had done the same on the land adjoining, and the landlord, wanting to throw these and perhaps a dozen other crofts into one large holding, had the right to turn these men out without any compensation. Anyone who remembered the inquiry of the Crofter Commission a dozen years ago would find these were the great grievances under which the crofters of the West Highlands were suffering. Though as a general rule in the North-East of Scotland most of the crofters possessed leases, it was not universally the case, and he was prepared to show how up to the present time there were constant cases occurring in that part of Scotland where the tenant was turned out of his holding without notice being given or any compensation being given. There was one case that came under the attention of the House and the country less than a year ago, which he would explain to the House, as it illustrated the unfortunate position of these men most clearly. In the west of Aberdeenshire, on property belonging to the Duke of Fife, a large number of sales took place in 1888 and

1889. In that part of the world the Duke sold a good farm to one of his tenants for a very small number of years' purchase. On that farm was a small croft of about five acres. The tenant who had bought the holding himself sold it to another man from another part of the country. The new landlord on entering on the property found this croft of five acres at the corner of the holding, and finding that the crofter who held it had no title to it and no lease, the landlord gave him notice to turn out of his holding in six months. No compensation was ever given to the man for the improvements he had made on the croft, or for the house that he had built upon it. This crofter was one of the oldest inhabitants of the district, and was alive now, being about 89 years of age. His father and his grandfather had rent receipts dating back from 1795, and had had 19 years' leases from 1845 to 1883. When this man wanted to renew his 19 years' lease, the factor to the Duke of Fife said, "Oh, you can go on as you are, you will never be disturbed." The man believed him, but the property was sold, and no means were taken that the property of this man should be safeguarded in the sale, and the new landlord was within his legal rights in turning him out without any compensation. The Duke of Fife was not in any way to blame for this, and as soon as the case was referred to him the Duke took action and immediately gave the man another croft in the neighbourhood. But what they wished to press upon the House and the Government was that it should not be in the power of a landlord to do this, that the legal rights of these men should, as in this case they ought to have been, be provided for under the sale and properly safeguarded. He would just say a word on the subject alluded to by the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson), that there were wider interests involved than were evident at first sight. They had constant complaints, which everyone deplored, that the population in the country districts was steadily decreasing, and that there was a migration from the country districts to the towns. That had taken place to a large degree in the country with regard to which he was now speaking, and, if they looked into the facts, they observed it was amongst that very class of individuals to which he was referring, and that it was most undesirable that it should be so. His right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland, in his observations on the good effects of the Crofters Act, alluded to the fact that the houses of the crofters had been so much improved under its provisions. He could give an illustration which showed how much the benefits of the Act were wanted in the North-East of Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman would find it stated in the Report of the Assistant Labour Commissioner that during last autumn he visited part of the North-East of Scotland, where he found that one crofter had to leave his croft because the house had been condemned by the sanitary officer, the landlord could not afford to rebuild it, and would not give a lease to the crofter so as to secure him in the rebuilding. That showed that the want of an extension of the Act perpetuated insanitary and bad houses in that part of the country. One word more on the general considerations. His hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) alluded to the fact that Aberdeenshire contained a larger number of agricultural holdings than any other county in Scotland. His hon. Friend quoted a Return issued for the year 1881, which showed the total number of holdings to be 11,947, and the holdings under £10 value numbered 3,866. In the Assistant Commissioner's Report they had the figures given for 1891 for Aberdeenshire, which showed that in the course of the 10 years the total number of holdings had diminished to 11,462, and the holdings under £10 had dropped to 3,100. That showed that the greatest diminution had been amongst the class who were crofters and cottars, and this had a very serious effect upon the general agriculture of Aberdeenshire and Banffshire; therefore he thought they could earnestly urge this extension of the provisions of the Crofters Act upon the Government in order to check the drain that was going on. They urged it for the sake of these crofter tenants themselves, in order that they might get security in the cultivation of their holdings, security that they would reap the benefits of their industry, and would not be turned out of their homes that in many cases they had built themselves without due compensation. He also urged it on the House and the Government that the provisions of the Act should be extended to them on the ground that they would thereby substantially improve the conditions of agriculture generally throughout Scotland, and do something more than they could do by these new Allotments and Small Holdings Acts to keep the small holdings that at present existed and check in some degree the constant drain that was going on from the country districts into the towns.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire) supported the Motion, and urged that this legislation should be extended not only as regarded the subject-matter, but geographically to those parts of the country where those who were under the same condition as the crofters could also, in the same way, get the relief which was conferred by the existing Crofters Act. He would specially refer to the county he had the honour to represent, because it was essentially a crofters' county and deserving of relief in this respect. It appeared from the Parliamentary Return which had already been quoted in the course of the Debate, that in the County of Banffshire the number of crofters—that was to say, those who paid less than £30 a year in rent—was no less than 3,573, whereas the larger holders who paid more than £150 a year only numbered 212. In other words, the small holders were as 16 to 1 compared with the large ones, and therefore Banffshire must have been accidentally overlooked when this relief was being given under the Crofters Act. With regard to the concession that had been agreed to by the Secretary for Scotland in the matter of the residences of the crofters, he should like to draw attention to a particular class of holding which was of considerable importance in his county. Many people in connection with their houses held in addition a portion of land in the near neighbourhood of a town, although they did not happen to live beside the town. They held the land on the strength of the occupation of the house, and the whole of the improvements in the land were made by themselves. But if the owner of the house sold his proprietary rights, the holder of the allotted land lost the whole of his improvements, which went to the purchaser. The tenant who had made the improvements had no possibility of getting compensation. This was a hard case, which might be met by the proposal of the Mover of the Resolution, supposing the Crofters Act was extended to such counties as Banffshire, and the people were anxious that this legislative relief should be extended to them. The County of Banffshire had a special anxiety as regarded one portion of the Crofters Act—namely, that portion with reference to harbours. There was no part of the Scottish coast more exposed to shipwreck and disaster than Murray Forth, and his constituents hoped that, by the extension of the Crofters Act, they would receive more attention to this question of harbour accommodation. He trusted the Secretary for Scotland would give the matter his most kind and careful consideration. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not consider that, because a very active agitation had not taken place in these parts of the country, that the people did not on that account feel very deeply. They were an extremely law-abiding, quiet, patient people, and he had always assured them that, in regard to what had been done for their brethren in the West, they must never think that because they were so quiet and patient the Government would fail to give them the same redress.

Sir L. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland) said, that the crofters in his constituency owed a deep debt of gratitude to the Government of 1886 for passing the Crofters Act, but, during the eight years it had been in operation, it had been shown that a considerable number of ameliorations and alterations were requisite. When the Act was passed it was felt to be a great act of emancipation, but unfortunately it was not a voluntary emancipation on the part of some landowners.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present:—

House adjourned at ten minutes after Ten o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 30th April 1894.

The Earl of Selborne—Sat Speaker.

House adjourned during pleasure; and resumed by the Lord Chancellor.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

MOTION FOR A RETURN.

*LORD NORTON moved for a Return from every County Council of any portions of the residue, after prior charges, of Customs and Excise Duties paid to local taxation under the 53rd & 54th Vict. c. 60, s. (2), put at their disposal for technical education, which had been appropriated by them to other purposes; and what may have been allowed to accumulate without appropriation. He thought it was high time that Parliament should know something about the expenditure of the very large annual grant made under the 53rd Vict. to the County and Borough Councils from 1891 for the purpose of technical education—in the meaning of that term under the Technical Education Act, 1889—being the residue of certain Customs and Excise Duty paid in relief of local taxation, after prior charges. The grant was necessarily uncertain and variable, but hitherto it had amounted to about £500,000 a year, besides £250,000 a year voted by County and Borough Councils for technical education out of the rates. A Royal Commission was about to sit on the general subject of secondary education, which made it the more urgent that this matter (which must, after all, be the basis of a considerable part of their inquiry) should be immediately laid before Parliament. Owners of real property, of course, felt no objection to the relief of local rates out of the Treasury; but the relief afforded them by this grant was of so vague and loose a nature and of so totally unconstitutional an origin that even those who might apparently be most benefited by it would have long ago repudiated it but for the general disinclination in human nature to refuse money, and to lose a share of anything scattered over the country for all claimants. With that feeling County Councils had all taken their share of the grant, and Parliament should now know what they had done with it. Last year a Return was made to Parliament of the extent to which County and Borough Councils had disposed of money grants for purposes of science and art and of technical and manual instruction. It appeared that the grant had been spent to a great extent for technical instruction under heads which required a good deal of criticism outside the present Motion. It had partly been applied by County and Borough Councils in payments for lectures on such subjects as dairy, laundry, and needlework, dressmaking, or in arts, such as wood-carving; and even going higher — to such subjects as mining. Many of those lectures so given were entirely at variance with the terms of the Act of 1889, by which the appropriation of public money for technical instruction under the Act of 1891 was limited. The Act of 1889 expressly excluded from the objects of technical instruction at public cost the practice of any trade or employment, and restricted it to the elementary teaching of science and art bearing upon practice. Elementary teaching in such subjects was now being largely given by Mechanics' Institutes, Literary Institutions, and by the Science and Art Department, which drew a sharp distinction between elementary and what they called advanced teaching upon such subjects. The advice of people most to be trusted upon the subject was always that that distinction should be drawn; and the recommendation of such men as Armstrong and Whitworth had always been that practice teaching should take place in actual practice, and that schools should not be used for the purpose of teaching trades. He appealed to their Lordships to consider, moreover, whether it was wise that the County Councils should be constituted an additional Educational Department. Generally speaking, he was not much in agreement with Mr. Acland, but in one respect he agreed entirely—namely, the necessity of reducing the number of Educational Departments in this country. At present there were four or five, and we appeared to be running into the mistake of constituting the County and Borough Councils an additional Depart-

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

ment. However, those Councils had now got this very large grant for technical education besides the power of rating, and had been led to confuse intermediate with technical instruction. Preparatory education was absolutely necessary to make lectures of any use whatever. Lectures were not teaching—they followed upon teaching. Without preparatory teaching a lecture was absolutely valueless. The lectures given by the County and Borough Councils were some of them useful, but were often addressed to persons who were not at all intended by Parliament to receive technical education at the public expense—in many cases they were given to children who were wholly incapable of making any use whatever of them, and in some cases they were very little attended at all. Again, the lecturers themselves were untrained, and often could put forward no claim for giving lectures at the public expense—beyond the general readiness of people to undertake anything which had a salary attached to it. As part of a national system of technical instruction the whole thing was an absolute disgrace to the country, and the sooner it was put an end to the better. He quite agreed with the statement of the Speaker of the House of Commons in addressing his constituents recently, that Parliament never intended this money to be frittered away as it was. But the worst of it was that the money was not only frittered away but the pretence stood in the way of much better work, both public and private, in the shape of technical instruction in art and science. The Return for which he was moving was in reality complementary to the Return made last year, which gave a list of subjects on which the County and Borough Councils were giving technical instruction. He wished now to know how far the Treasury grants had been expended for subjects totally different, and also the portions which they had not spent at all, but were accumulating for future purposes. The most important instance was that of the London County Council, which for the first year devoted the whole of their grant, £160,000, simply in relief of rates, without applying it to any technical purpose; and he could name a County Council which had used a portion of the grant in paying off county debts in respect of buildings and other matters. Several such instances might be given upon which the House ought to have information. When the grant was first proposed the Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Hartington, asked the Minister in the House of Commons what assurance he could give that the grant placed at the disposal of the County Councils for technical education would not be spent for other purposes. Their Lordships knew the history of this most unconstitutional grant of money. It was originally proposed to be given to compensate the brewers for the loss of licences; but the House of Commons would not consent, and the money was transferred and devoted under the Customs and Excise Act to technical instruction. Lord Hartington's question was answered that no Minister would ever allow the grants to be applied otherwise. But it had already, within three years, been to a considerable extent applied to other purposes. In his own County, Warwickshire, it had been allowed to accumulate for what might seem a good object to some people's minds — the establishment of an Agricultural College. If every county, puzzled to know what to do with this money, undertook such schemes, a number of institutions would be established far beyond what were wanted. Colleges of that kind were not wanted in every county throughout the Kingdom. It was really the difficulty of knowing how to dispose of this money that had put such notions into the heads of County Councils. The grant was precarious, and as the Duke of Devonshire's question implied a fear, supposing the money was devoted to other purposes, what was to become of the technical instruction which had been set up under its encouragement? It must either fall through, or become a charge upon the rates. In fact, by such desultory and uncertain patchwork of national education we were damaging the country's interest in a most important work, and spending large sums of public money which a real system would most advantageously economise for the public benefit.

Lord MONKSWELL: My Lords, there is no objection on the part of the Local Government Board, by which Department this Return should be made, to grant it, with some slight modifications, which, having mentioned them to him, I think the noble Lord will agree with. I will not deal with the strictures passed on the schemes for technical instruction put forward by the various County Councils, as I have no sufficient knowledge of the matter. My noble Friend Lord Playfair has undertaken to answer in this House for the Education Department; but the Notice on the Paper deals exclusively with matters other than educational, and therefore I could not suppose that the noble Lord intended on this occasion to say anything on the subject of particular schemes for technical education. The noble Lord has specially referred to the London County Council. The London County Council do not desire that there should be the slightest mystery about what they have done with the money they have received, and they are ready to give their reasons for the course they have adopted. In the first year, it is true, they spent none of the money upon technical education; but the sum spent in the second year was £30,000; next year they propose to spend £57,000; and in the year following probably £90,000. When the proposal was made that a larger sum should be put in the County Council budget for technical instruction, Sir J. Lubbock objected, and said it was desirable that the Council should proceed tentatively. In the schemes now in operation there would be an automatic increase of scholarships and grants which, in the course of the next few years, would swallow up all that had been received from the Beer and Spirit Duties. The Government will assent to the Return moved for if the noble Lord will restrict it to the four years ending 31 March, 1894, and to expenditure other than educational, as there are already Returns of all that has been done in educational work and of what has been allowed to accumulate without appropriation. I hope that will meet with the approbation of the noble Lord.

*LORD NORTON said, he was quite content with that alteration. He only wished to say that the Returns already given of expenditure on technical education were not entirely satisfactory. The subjects were given under certain heads, but it was not shown how the expenditure on each head was made. That was the point of his complaint.

Return showing, as regards the moneys received by the council of each county and county borough in England and Wales out of the residue of the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Duties in respect of the four years ended the 31st of March, 1894, the aggregate amount expended by each council on purposes other than educational; and what has been allowed to accumulate without appropriation: Ordered to be laid before the House.—(*The Lord Norton.*)

CHARITABLE TRUSTS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 12.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): My Lords, I have received a number of suggestions with regard to this Bill not bearing upon the specific provisions contained in it, but suggesting modifications with regard to the Charitable Trusts Acts as consolidated last year. I do not propose to deal with them in detail now in Committee of the House, but I desire to say that they have not escaped my notice, and that I shall submit them in Grand Committee.

Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 2) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order); Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

COUNTY COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (SCOTLAND) EXPENSES BILL.—(No. 27.)

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3) Bill [H.L.].

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888—Was presented by the Lord Playfair; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 35.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 4) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 36.)

House adjourned at five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 30th April 1894.

QUESTIONS.

THE CASTLEBLAYNEY MILK CONTRACT.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that, on the 14th of March, the Castleblayney Board of Guardians had before them contracts for milk, lower by a penny a gallon for sweet milk and a halfpenny a gallon than the accepted tender; and if, by this action of the Guardians, an additional expense of £150 is placed upon the rates?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The facts appear to be as stated in the first paragraph, though I am informed that the Guardians did not bind themselves to accept the lowest tender. The loss to the ratepayers will be, I understand, about £38—assuming the same quantity and quality of milk to be received during the current year as last year. The Local Government Board have pointed out to the Guardians that their action is not only injurious to the ratepayers, but calculated to prevent competition in tendering for workhouse supplies.

MR. W. JOHNSTON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the reason for the acceptance of the tender was the fact that the tenderer was a Nationalist?

[No answer was given.]

THE FINANCIAL RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Waterford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now state the names of the Members of the Commission to inquire into the Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: I hope that at the end of the week I shall be in a position to state the names to the House.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): May I ask how Scotland, which is included in the inquiry, is to be represented on the Commission?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have been fortunate enough to secure the services of three distinguished Scotch Members.

THE POST OFFICE AND THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the agreement with the Telephone Companies has been completed or has made further progress; and what sum he proposes to expend out of loan on telephones in the present year?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Is it the case that this agreement has been under discussion for nearly two years, and is not the effect to give the Telephone Companies practically a monopoly as against the Municipalities who wish to obtain licences to provide the telephone service of their towns?

*__THE POSTMASTER GENERAL__ (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I believe the heads of agreement were signed towards the end of June, 1892, but since then no further powers have been given to the Telephone Companies, and, therefore, I do not think that the position of the Municipalities has been prejudiced. In answer to the question on the Paper, I have to say that considerable progress has been made with the agreement to which my right hon. Friend refers, and within the last few weeks the points of difference between the Telephone Companies and the Post Office have been brought within such narrow compass that I am led to believe that it may be possible to lay the agreement on the Table of the House very shortly. As to the sum to be expended out of the loan in the present year, I should prefer not to give an estimate until the arrangements with the Companies have been completed.

MR. LABOUCHERE: But has not the right hon. Gentleman already refused licences to Municipalities, and has not the effect of the delay been to enable the Companies to cover new ground and establish connections, thereby placing themselves in a better position than those

Municipalities which wish to obtain licences?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I do not know that that has been the effect. No doubt Municipalities have made applications, but they have been considered on their merits.

Sir J. WHITEHEAD (Leicester): Then what is the cause of the dissatisfaction of the Borough of Kendal on this subject?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I have had communications from the Borough of Kendal, but I do not carry all the details in my mind, so that I cannot now answer that question.

Sir J. WHITEHEAD: I will put a question on another day.

SAMOA.

Sir T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if it would be possible to establish in Samoa a system similar to that which has worked so successfully at Tonga, and under which the independence of the people is secured?

Mr. HOGAN (Tipperary, Mid.): At the same time, may I ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to Article 8, Section 1, of the Final Act of the Conference on the Affairs of Samoa, signed at Berlin, on the 14th of June, 1889, which provides that the Act shall continue in force until changed by consent of the three Powers, and that, upon the request of either Power, after three years, the Powers shall consider by common accord what ameliorations, if any, may be introduced into the provisions of the General Act; and whether he will consider the propriety of consulting the Governments of Germany and the United States without delay, as to the feasibility of the proposal, approved by all the Australasian Governments, to place Samoa under the administrative jurisdiction of New Zealand?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): Her Majesty's Government are aware of the provisions of the Article quoted as regards ameliorations of the Act; but this Article is governed by the Declaration of the first Article, that none of the Powers parties to the Act shall exercise any separate control over the islands or the Government thereof. The proposals of the Colonies therefore are not feasible whilst the Act is in force, and the 8th Article which provides for its amelioration does not contemplate its abrogration, to which Her Majesty's Government have no reason to suppose that the other parties to the Act would consent in order to place Samoa under the administration of New Zealand; the whole subject, however, is receiving the serious attention of Her Majesty's Government.

EXPENSES UNDER THE LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACT.

Mr. E. BARRY (Cork County, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the expenses incurred by the Guardians of the poor in Ireland in increasing existing allotments to one acre each under the recent Act amending the Labourers' (Ireland) Act are equal in amount to the cost incurred in the acquisition of the original half-acre; and whether steps will be taken to simplify the procedure and reduce the cost of obtaining the additional half-acre?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Under the existing Acts the present half-acre allotments in Ireland cannot be increased to an acre until after compliance with the usual preliminaries as to representation, scheme, notices, local inquiry, Provisional Order, &c. The expenses would, therefore, be probably about the same as were incurred in relation to the taking of the original half-acre; but, if Boards of Guardians could arrange for the acquisition of the additional land by agreement with the persons interested, the portion of the expenses incidental to compulsory purchase would, of course, be saved. The terms upon which the original plot was taken would naturally serve as a basis for such agreement in each case.

MAROTSILAND.

Mr. CROSFIELD (Lincoln): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether communications have been received at the Foreign Office complaining, in the name and on behalf of Lewanika, King of the Marotsi, that agents of the British South Africa Company, under guise of being the Queen's Representatives, and using envelopes marked "On Her Majesty's

Service," and under pretence of the establishment of British protection, procured sole rights of working the resources of his country, as is stated by Dr. James Johnston, recently returned from South Africa; whether the Company was authorised to send agents to represent themselves as an Embassy from the Queen Victoria of England; and whether Her Majesty's Secretary of State is taking steps to prevent Trading Companies from deceiving the rulers of Native tribes in Africa by the improper use of the name of Her Majesty the Queen?

SIR E. GREY: No communications from Lewanika have been received at the Foreign Office. A letter, however, dated November 1, 1890, was forwarded from him through Sir H. Loch to the Colonial Office, in which he referred to his agreement with the South Africa Company and inquired as to its relations to the Crown. In reply, Sir H. Loch was authorised to assure this Chief of the protection of Her Majesty, and to inform him of the position of the Company under its Charter. The Company is not authorised to state that its Agents represent the Crown, and the Secretary of State would not permit any Company or individuals wrongfully to make use of Her Majesty's name.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE STRANORLAR UNION.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a representation, in accordance with the Labourers' Acts, was made by ratepayers of the Convoy Electoral Division to the Stranorlar Board of Guardians, asking for the election of six labourers' cottages in the townland of Augheygalt, the existing dwellings having been condemned by the Sanitary Inspector as unfit for human habitation; that on a division on the question at the Board of Guardians the scheme was rejected by the votes of *ex officio* Guardians; whether he is aware that the six labourers in question have, since the meeting of the Guardians, all been served with notices to quit before the 5th of May next; that there are no vacant houses in Augheygalt or any of the neighbouring townlands; and that all the six families will have to go to the workhouse; and what the Local Government Board propose to do in the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts are generally as stated in paragraph 1. The scheme was rejected by the Guardians by 12 votes to 7, and I understand that four of the Guardians who voted with the majority are *ex officios.* With regard to paragraph 2, it would appear that only one of the labourers has actually received a notice to quit on the 5th proximo, and also that there are no vacant houses in the neighbourhood. The Local Government Board have received a Memorial from the persons who signed the representation in this case conplaining of the action of the Guardians in declining to make an improvement scheme, and the Board have decided to instruct their Inspector to hold an inquiry into the matter on the 17th proximo.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, N.): Is it not the fact that the rejection of the application was due as much to the votes of elected Guardians as of the *ex officio* Guardians; and were notices of eviction served on the labourers before the rejection of the application?

MR. J. MORLEY: As to the first part of the hon. Member's question he can work out the answer from the figures I have given the House. I am not in a position to answer the second part of his question.

CASUALTIES TO VESSELS AT HOYLAKE.

COLONEL COTTON-JODRELL (Cheshire, Wirral): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to the fact that recently several casualties have again occurred to vessels endeavouring to enter or quit the lake at Hoylake, Cheshire, especially to the trawler *Perseverance*, to the *Pride of the Lake*, *Princess*, *Sunshine*, *Gentle Annie*, and to the *Velocity*, which last-named vessel sank on the bar at the west end; and whether he can now see his way to instructing the proper authorities to restore the Hoylake to a condition of safe navigation?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA, Sheffield, Brightside): Sixty years ago the Hoylake possessed an anchorage with about

10 feet of water at low water of spring tides. Since then it has been silting up until at the present time it is only navigable at half-tide, and even then the channel is practically too narrow for navigation except with a fair wind. The casualties mentioned in the hon. and gallant Member's question are attributable to the crowded state of the narrow channel. I am not aware of any authority that is bound to maintain a regulated depth of water in the Hoylake.

Colonel COTTON-JODRELL: The right hon. Gentleman was kind enough, last year, to send down an Inspector to inquire into the lighting of this harbour; will he take a similar course this year in regard to the silting up?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I will see what can be done, but I may point out to the hon. and gallant Member with regard to the lighting that there is a Local Authority responsible for it to the Board of Trade. There is no authority which is bound to maintain a regulated depth of water.

THE APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES.

Mr. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Return, ordered by this House, of County Magistrates appointed since the Resolution of the 5th of May, 1893, that such appointments should no longer be made by the Lords Chancellor of Great Britain and Ireland only on the recommendation of the Lords Lieutenant, will be printed and presented; if he will inform the House how many of such Justices have, in Great Britain, been appointed without being in fact nominated or recommended by the Lords Lieutenant; and when it is probable time will be found for presenting to this House and carrying a Bill for rendering the property qualification, at present required for the County Magistracy, unnecessary, or found for proceeding with one of the Bills for that purpose now before the House?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): I have this day laid the Return ordered by the House of County Magistrates appointed since the Resolution of May, 1893, on the Table, and, as soon as the Order is made by the House for printing and circulating, it will, in due course, be in the hands of Members. The Lord Chancellor cannot give the particulars as to which Justices have been appointed without being nominated or recommended by the Lord Lieutenant. With regard to the introduction of a Bill, I cannot say more at the present moment than that the subject is engaging the attention of the Government.

Mr. DODD: Can the Lord Chancellor tell us how many have been appointed without giving their names and counties?

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir.

"TORISH *v.* ORR."

Mr. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the decision of Her Majesty's Court of Appeal in Ireland, in the case of "Torish *v.* Orr," to the effect that the provisions of the Local Registration of Title Act do not apply to cases of devolution of title under wills; and is it the intention of the Irish Government to take steps to remedy this omission in the Act?

Mr. J. MORLEY: My attention has been called to this decision. It is a matter for consideration whether the decision points to a defect in the Act which should be remedied. The case has not been reported yet in the authorised Reports, so I am not at present in a position to make any further statement in the matter.

MR. JAMES GRANT, J.P.

Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. James Grant, lately made a Magistrate for the County Antrim, resides chiefly in Glasgow, where he owns several public-houses, and that he only occasionally visits Toome Bridge, County Antrim, where he some time ago purchased the "O'Neill Arms Hotel," which has a public bar attached; and whether he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Lord Chancellor informs me that it is not a fact that the gentleman named has been appointed to the Commission of the Peace.

LUNATICS IN BELFAST WORKHOUSE.

Mr. SEXTON: On behalf of the Member for South Down, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the death of J. Casey, in the Lunatic Department of the Belfast Workhouse, whether he has yet seen the Report of the Committee appointed by the Guardians to inquire into the circumstances in connection with his death; what explanation, if any, was given of the absence of relief or medical attendance from the time the night warder came on duty, and particularly during the two hours and a-half of Casey's suffering in an epileptic fit; and if he will consider the advisability of directing a sworn inquiry into the condition and management of the Lunatic Department? At the same time, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government have ascertained since I last put a question on this subject that of 490 persons confined in the Lunatic Department of Belfast Workhouse since the 15th of December last 45 have died?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say if that is so. I have read the Report of the Committee of the Guardians in connection with this matter. The deceased man Casey was seen by both the medical officers before his death, and the reason assigned for not visiting him after the night attendant came on duty was that the man was dying and that nothing more could be done for him. Had the facts of the case as elicited by the Guardians been before the jury at the coroner's inquest, it is conceivable their verdict would have been different. As at present advised, I see no necessity for holding a sworn inquiry, as suggested by the question; however, I will look further into the matter.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman introduce the Bill on this subject which he promised some time ago?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have it under consideration.

Mr. SEXTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman observed that part of the evidence in which the warder states that the deceased lay struggling in epileptic fits for two and a-half hours and no doctor was sent for? Does the right hon. Gentleman know that the coroner is strongly of opinion that this matter needs to be further inquired into; and should the right hon. Gentleman find it to be a fact that out of 490 patients 45 have died since December last, will he order a sworn inquiry to be held?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will make inquiries into the allegations of my hon. Friend, and I am calling for a further Report on this particular case.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ISLAND OF CUMBRAE.

Mr. GRAHAM MURRAY (Buteshire): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that upon five days of the week the first delivery of letters in the burgh of Millport, in the Island of Cumbrae, does not take place till 12.30 p.m., while the last mail outward leaves at 2.15; and whether he can give hopes of arranging for an earlier delivery, so as to allow of an adequate time to answer letters requiring prompt attention?

Mr. A. MORLEY: It is the fact that, during the present season of the year, on four (not five) days a week the arrangements in force at Millport are as the hon. Member describes them. On Mondays and Thursdays the mails arrive much earlier, and during the summer months, beginning in June, the more convenient service is maintained six days a week. I should have been glad to sanction some moderate increase of expense for securing all the year round the steamer service afforded in the summer; but it appears that the contractors are unable to arrange for any improvement of the hours except at a very large increase of expense, and I regret that, under the circumstances, no improvement is feasible.

WELSH CATHEDRAL CHURCHES.

Mr. JASPER MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow): On behalf of the hon. Member for West Belfast, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state how much money has been raised by subscription or private donations for the purpose of restoring, adding to, and decorating the Cathedral Churches of Llandaff and St. David's since the year 1703; and what portion, if any, of the total sums devoted to the above purposes, within the period named, have been taken from any Welsh

National Fund, or from any public moneys raised exclusively within the Principality of Wales?

MR. ASQUITH: I have no information which would enable me to answer this question with accuracy or fulness. It appears from the House of Lord's Churches and Cathedrals Return of June 27, 1892, that in the case of Llandaff the cathedral has been restored by public subscription at a cost of £3,424, and in the case of St. David's at a cost of £43,452, of which £25,816 consisted of legacies and donations and interest thereon. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners inform me that they have made for structural purposes a grant of £5,000 to Llandaff and one of £10,000 to St. David's. The former appears to have been for some purpose other than the restoration of the cathedral; the latter is included in the £43,452, which, as I have stated, was the total cost of the restoration.

THE "ESCAPED NUN" AT GLASGOW.

MR. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been directed to the prosecution and conviction, at Glasgow Police Court, on the 23rd instant, of a person falsely styling herself an escaped nun, whose lectures had occasioned several disturbances at Glasgow; whether he is aware that, in the case of a person named Evans, who incited her to deliver the lectures and paid her for her services, while making a charge for admission to the place of meeting, and who was proved to have given her an obscene book from which to obtain material for her lectures, the Magistrates held the charge "not proven"; and whether there is any means of reviewing this decision?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): The statements made in the question are substantially accurate, subject to this explanation—that at the trial Evans denied that he gave the person who called herself an escaped nun any book or books, although he admitted that she had access to them. I am informed that the Magistrate, while holding the charge against Evans not proven, commented severely on his conduct. There is no power of reviewing the decision.

KILPEDDER PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the removal of the Kilpedder Petty Sessions District Court from Kilgarvan to Kenmare, which is causing great inconvenience to the inhabitants of the district, many of whom are obliged to travel nearly 18 miles to have their cases heard; and that the proprietors of 30 business houses are obliged to take their weights and measures to Kenmare to be tested quarterly; if he is aware that the Kilpedder Petty Sessions Court was established nearly a century ago, and is in the centre of a populous district 12 miles square; and whether, as there is a Magistrate available living within a quarter of a mile of the town, he will direct that the Petty Sessions Court be re-established?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the Court of Petty Sessions was recently removed to Kenmare under the provisions of Section 1 of the 14th & 15th Vict. c. 93, at the instance of the Justices at Quarter Sessions. It is a fact that, in some cases, the people may have to travel 18 miles to Kenmare to have their cases heard, and that a number of shopkeepers will be obliged, under the altered arrangement, to have their weights and measures tested twice a year. I understand that the reasons assigned for the transfer of the Sessions were the non-attendance of Justices, and the consequent adjournments at the place where they were formerly held.

MR. KILBRIDE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the inhabitants of the district had already petitioned the Lord Lieutenant against the removal, and that no Magistrate belonging to the Petty Sessional District voted in favour of the change at the Court of Quarter Sessions?

MR. J. MORLEY: No, Sir.

IRISH LANDLORDS' TITHE RENT CHARGE ARREARS.

MR. GIBNEY (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state what is the amount of arrears of tithe rent-charge due by Irish landlords to the Irish Land Commission; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing the details of the arrears, including the name of each debtor, the amount due by him, and the period of time covered by his debt?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Tithe rent-charge receivable by the Irish Land Commission, though principally, is not altogether payable by landlords. The arrears have continuously decreased year by year since 1889. On March 31 last the arrears, though the accounts for the year just closed have not yet been audited, amounted to £86,848. The arrears, as appearing at the close of the financial year, March 31, do not truly represent the state of default, as they include a considerable amount of the half-yearly gale in course of collection. The collection of this charge is being vigorously pressed, and under the circumstances I do not consider that any useful purpose would be gained by the presentation of a Return as suggested.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): How much rent do the Irish landlords owe?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I cannot say.

Mr. SEXTON: Is the paper showing the position of the Irish Church Fund ready yet?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No.

Mr. SEXTON: How soon will it be circulated?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Very shortly, I hope.

THE LEWIS ESTATE IN COUNTY GALWAY.

Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any rent has been paid for the premises occupied by the police stationed in the yard adjoining the residence of Mrs. Lewis in the County of Galway; and, if so, to whom have the payments been made; and whether he is aware that the premises held under lease for the Constabulary do not include the premises occupied by the Constabulary in the yard, and are a considerable distance from the residence?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Inspector General informs me that no rent has been paid for the premises referred to in the first part of the question. The fact is as stated in the second paragraph.

DEFALCATIONS OF BARONY CONSTABLES IN MONAGHAN COUNTY.

Mr. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the serious defalcations that have successively occurred in the accounts of two barony constables, who are brothers named Cuming, well-known Orangemen, in the County of Monaghan; whether these appointments were made by the Grand Jury of the county; and whether, in both cases, the sureties have failed to make good the losses; whether anything can be done to make the Grand Jurors responsible for the sums so lost in the event of it being shown that insufficient inquiries were made as to the solvency of the men appointed and of their sureties; whether a solicitor, named Wright, who acted for the Grand Jury in the matter of these appointments, was at the same time a member of the Grand Jury; and whether this is legal?

Mr. J. MORLEY: It is a fact that two persons named Cuming have been defaulters in their accounts as barony constables of the County Monaghan. Proceedings have been taken against both men and their sureties, and it is believed that the entire amount of the defalcations will be recovered in each case. The appointments were made by the Grand Jury, and I am informed by the Clerk of the Peace that prior to making the appointments the Grand Jury inquired into and were satisfied as to the solvency of the persons and their sureties. With regard to the fourth paragraph, I am informed that the solicitor referred to was not a member of the Grand Jury when these appointments were made.

THE VOLUNTEER DECORATION.

Mr. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether Volunteers who have served in India and the Colonies will be entitled to the new decoration on the same terms as those who have served at home?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): Yes, Sir; substantially the same.

LONDON DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the district surveyors in London, in cases of neglect of duty, are responsible to the London County Council; and, if not, to whom?

MR. ASQUITH: This is a question which cannot be answered in any particular case without reference to the special circumstances and to the provisions of the several Acts of Parliament which deal with the matter. Speaking generally, the district surveyors are responsible to the London County Council.

SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN, J.P.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who, at the Albrighton Petty Sessions, on the 25th of April, was fined £5 and costs for shocking cruelty to a horse on the 5th of March last, the Chairman stating that the Magistrates were unanimously of an opinion that the case had been proved; and whether the Government propose to remove Sir Watkin Williams Wynn from the position of Lord Lieutenant and Magistrate?

MR. ASQUITH: Yes. All that I can say at present is that the case is one requiring the careful and serious consideration of those authorities who are responsible in regard to the offices which this gentleman holds.

LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES OFF SHERKIN ISLAND, AND LOSS OF NETS AND GEAR BY FISHERMEN.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that during the recent storm off the Mizen Head, Baltimore, and Sherkin Island, a number of men who rescued the crew of one boat were in peril of their lives, in consequence of the want of a lifeboat, life-buoys, and other life-saving appliances, he will have these provided for Baltimore, Sherkin Island, Cape Clear, Schull, Bere Island, Sheep's Head, Dursay Island, and Blackball?

MR. MUNDELLA: I assume that my hon. Friend refers to the case of the *Christian Wilhelm* of which I have not yet received full particulars. There is already a rocket apparatus at Baltimore as well as one at Crookhaven. Schull is provided with belts and lines, and there are belts on Bere Island, and belts and lines at numerous other adjacent places, and I will consider whether any further provision is necessary. Lifeboats are not supplied by the Board of Trade; and with regard to them, I must refer my hon. Friend to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Can the right hon. Gentleman inform the House how the lifeboats are used when the wind is blowing on shore?

MR. MUNDELLA: I must ask for notice of that question.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that during the recent gale off the Mizen Head, Baltimore, and Sherkin Island, numbers of fishermen have lost their nets, and are thereby deprived of their means of livelihood, he will recommend the Congested Districts Board to make inquiries, in order that assistance may be rendered that will enable them to pursue their calling?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board are unable to make free grants to fishermen whose boats or gear are injured or lost, but any application for loans will be favourably entertained by the Board.

SEAMEN AND STOKERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the percentage of seamen and of stokers, respectively, who re-engage to complete the full period of service; what percentage of those who do not immediately re-engage return to the service within 12 months; and whether he will consent to a Return giving these figures for the last 10 years?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): The latest figures available are those which I gave in Debate on the Navy Estimates the other day. It was found in 1891 that of the seamen 65½ per cent., and of the stokers 84½ per cent. re-engage. If my hon. Friend desires later or further particulars in the form of a Return perhaps he will confer with me.

THE INDIAN MINTS.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether there is any foundation for the rumour that the experiment of closing the Indian mints having failed to secure the object aimed at and caused a general paralysis of Indian trade, the Government contemplate an abandonment of that experiment either immediately or in June next at latest?

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I beg, at the same time, to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether there is any foundation for the report that it is proposed to reopen the Indian mints for the free coinage of rupees?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): There is no foundation for the reports that it is proposed to reopen the mints. Such a measure has not been contemplated either by the Government of India or the Secretary of State in Council.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Is it not the case that the Indian Government are either refusing or are unable to lend rupees to banks which also are unable to buy them, with the result that there is a great scarcity of rupees required for legitimate business purposes?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: The hon. Member has really put an argumentative question, which I should have to say a great deal upon if I attempted to answer it. If he will put down a question as to specific facts, I will do my best to reply to it.

Mr. CONYBEARE: My question is based on a specific statement contained in a telegram from one of the largest houses of business in Calcutta as follows:—

> "Money market very hard; bank rate expected to advance."

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! The hon. Member should embody that in a question and give notice of it; that is the usual course to take.

HERRING FISHING ON THE SCOTTISH COASTS.

Sir W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the fishermen of the East Coast of Scotland have decided to commence the herring fishing on the West Coast from the 7th of May; that this decision has been come to with the concurrence of the fish curers and the English fish buyers, and with the approval of the local Magistrates at Stornoway; and that certain of the Lewis and Harris fishermen desire the fishing to commence on the 15th of May, and have adopted an attitude of opposition towards those who propose to commence fishing on the 7th; and whether he will despatch a couple of gunboats to Stornoway in order to satisfy the East Coast fishermen that they will be allowed to pursue their lawful industry without hindrance?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The circumstances mentioned by my hon. Friend were fully and betimes brought before me by the Sheriff of Ross and Cromarty and by the Fishery Board. I laid the situation before the Admiralty, which at once arranged for one of Her Majesty's gunboats to be at Stornoway by the 1st of May, with a view to the preservation of peace and order. The *Niger*, I believe, arrived at Stornoway last week. I cannot believe that the fishermen will commit acts of disorder which, as I am informed on the best authority, would have a disastrous effect on the fishing trade of their own island. But, in any case, the circumstances are fully before the Board of Admiralty, which will take care that a sufficient force will be provided, if it is required.

SCHOOL FEES AT MATLOCK.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the accounts of the Matlock Bank All Saints Church of England School for the year ending the 31st of March, 1893, by which it appears that £43 12s. 11d., or about 4s. 9d. per child, was levied as fees; whether the difference between the former fee income and the fee grant is under 3s. a child; whether his attention has further been called to a circular of the managers of this school, in which it is stated that the usual school fee is 2d. a week; what action he has taken to prevent the overcharge to parents; and whether he is prepared under Section 1 of the Act of 1891 to stop the whole of the fee grant if any overcharge has been made in 1894?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R. Rotherham): The facts as stated in the first two paragraphs of the question are correct, except that the amount charged as fees last year was not 4s. 9d., but 3s. 8d., per child, the amount allowable being 2s. 11¾d. The overcharge was deducted from the fee grant, and the managers warned that the fee grant would be liable to forfeiture should any overcharge be repeated. It appears from the Returns which have just come in for 1894 that the managers have this year charged something under what they were entitled to charge. It also appears that out of 251 children on the books, 80 are paying fees of 2d. a week, the remainder being free. I understand that the managers have refused applications for more free places in the school, but I do not know the terms of the circular which they are stated to have issued on the subject.

THE OAKINGTON (CAMBS.) OVERSEERS.

Mr. P. STANHOPE (Burnley): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Chesterton Division of Cambridgeshire, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that at the recent Vestry meeting in the village of Oakington, in Cambridgeshire, Mr. William Doggett and Mr. William Harradine were the two first names on the list nominated as Overseers, that the Chairman of the meeting informed the meeting that the names would be submitted to the Magistrates in the same order, and that the meeting expressed their satisfaction, knowing that it is the custom for Justices to appoint the two names which head the list; whether he is aware that the outgoing Overseers reversed the order, placing their own names first, and so secured their own re-appointment; whether the Chairman of the meeting has certified that the minutes of the Vestry meeting show that the two aforesaid names were placed first with a view to their appointment by the Justices; and whether he will take steps to secure the reversal of the appointment which the Justices made upon a wrong presentment of the facts, and so carry out the wishes of the people of Oakington? I wish also to supplement it by a paragraph which the Clerk at the Table informs me was omitted by inadvertence—namely, whether the Overseers are trustees with the Churchwardens of the Church Townlands Charity, and whether complaint has not been made to the Charity Commissioners of the management of the said charity?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I am afraid I can only answer the question on the Paper. I have no information as to the facts beyond that given in the question of my hon. Friend and certain newspaper extracts which have been forwarded to me. The Local Government Board have no jurisdiction whatever with regard to the appointment of Overseers, and they are not, therefore, empowered to take any steps as suggested for the reversal of the appointments which have been made by the Justices. I may add that after the present year the appointment of the Overseers in this parish will vest in the Parish Council.

NENAGH WATERWORKS LOAN.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that the Nenagh Board of Guardians several months ago applied for a supplemental loan of £800 for their waterworks, and that the amount was duly granted with the sanction of the Local Government Board; that ever since the Board of Guardians have failed to get payments of this amount, though representing on several occasions to the Local Government Board that they were being threatened with legal proceedings by their contractor for a balance of £500 on account of the waterworks contract, and which they could not pay out of the rates; and whether, as the matter is now one of extreme urgency, he will be so good as to make inquiries into the cause of this great delay, and see that the amount in question will be at once paid in to the credit of the Guardians?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): Treasury sanction was notified by the Board of Works on the 5th of April to the Guardians, with a request to lodge the preliminary expenses forthwith, which was not done until the 17th instant. The mortgage can go out at once on the Guardians forwarding to the Board of Works the deed of conveyance of the lands to be charged, which they were asked to do on the 25th instant.

LIVERPOOL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

MR. SAUNDERS (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the fact that half-time learners were employed at the Telegraph Office in Liverpool to replace the day clerks who were put on night duty to deal with the Budget; and whether, in view of the fact that these half-time learners are paid 6s. per week, and are sometimes so kept for 12 or 18 months after passing their examination before receiving an appointment, being in the meantime employed on men's duties, he can see his way to improve the position of these learners?

MR. A. MORLEY: In regard to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, it is the fact that half-time learners were employed to replace the telegraphists. This arrangement was made for the good of the Public Service, but I regard it also as a distinct advantage to the learners who were so employed. In regard to the second paragraph, if the persons to whom the hon. Member refers have any representation to make, and will submit it in the usual official way, it will receive attention.

NEWSPAPER POSTAGE.

MR. SAUNDERS: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he can state approximately the amount of loss which arises from the carriage of high-priced newspapers, weighing from two to eight ounces or over for a halfpenny; and if this loss cannot be stopped, will he equalise the postal privileges on newspapers by allowing smaller newspapers to send parcels up to eight ounces for the same rate?

MR. A. MORLEY: The whole loss arising from the carriage of newspapers at the halfpenny rate is estimated at about £90,000 a year, but I am unable to say what portion of the loss is assignable to newspapers exceeding two ounces in weight. Under the Act of Parliament a single registered newspaper is carried for a halfpenny irrespective of its weight, and the hon. Member's suggestion, if I understand it aright, is that a parcel of newspapers up to a weight of eight ounces should be carried for a halfpenny irrespective of their number. Such a scheme would largely augment the loss, and could not be defended.

WRITERS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

MR. SAUNDERS: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, as practically all the eligible writers are now promoted in the Education Department, he can deal similarly with those in the Science and Art Department, South Kensington?

MR. ACLAND: The writers in the Science and Art Department have been promoted and made abstractors or assistant clerks as fast as such posts could properly be constituted. There are now 34 such promoted writers in the Department, and an application is now before the Treasury for 13 more. There will then only remain 30 writers in the Department eligible for promotion. No further abstractors are at present necessary.

THE ESTATE DUTY.

MR. CARSON (Dublin University): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the proposed increased Estate Duties will be payable in Ireland by tenants who have purchased their holdings under the Land Purchase Acts; if so, whether the instalments of such duties will be a charge in priority or subsequent to the purchase instalments payable to the State?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): Yes, if the net value of the property at the time of the tenant's death exceeds £100. If the net value is between £100 and £1,000, the payment of Estate Duty will exempt the property from Succession Duty. The instalments of Estate Duty will be a charge subsequent to the purchase instalments payable to the State.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask whether, in the case of a tenant purchaser who has only partly paid the duty, will he be charged on the whole amount of principal, without regard to the balance due to the State?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must ask my hon. Friend to give notice of that. I am obliged to be very careful in answering these questions.

MR. CARSON: In estimating what Estate Duty is to be paid, will the period of the tenancy be taken into consideration?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I must ask for notice of all these questions.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount of the estimated yield of £3,500,000 from the alteration of the Death Duties is estimated as likely to be paid in Ireland; and what part of the relief from the alteration in the mode of assessment under Schedule A, and what part of the relief from the increase of the limit of partial or total exemption will be enjoyed by Ireland?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Death Duties paid by Ireland are under 5 per cent. of the total for the United Kingdom. The exact proportion last year was 4·9. I cannot say what will be the precise share of Ireland's contribution to the addition to Death Duties, which is estimated at £3,500,000. But, inasmuch as this addition is largely due to graduation, and there is a far smaller porportion of large estates in Ireland than in Great Britain, it follows that the contribution of Ireland to the additional duty will be at a lower percentage than her contribution to the existing duty. Taking it at 3 per cent., it would amount to £105,000. Ireland will be comparatively little affected by the alteration of assessment under Schedule A, inasmuch as the assessment to Income Tax in Ireland is on the net value of land, not on the gross, as in Great Britain. The relief which Ireland will get from the raising of the limit of exemption or abatement will be from £35,000 to £40,000.

MR. KNOX: Is not the amount contributed by Ireland over 8½ per cent., and is not that a larger share proportionately than is paid by Great Britain?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The answer I have given is the result of careful examination on the part of the Inland Revenue, and I cannot say more at present.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Are we to understand that the effect of the new tax will be that England will have to pay a still larger share of this tax, although she is so much under-represented in this House?

[The question was not answered.]

THE FEES TO THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government intend to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the present vacancy in the office of Attorney General to revise the conditions under which the Law Officers of the Crown now discharge their duties, so as to provide that their whole time be devoted to the Public Service, and that the emoluments of their offices be reduced?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes, Sir; that matter is now under consideration.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Will the right hon. Gentleman lay upon the Table of the House any Papers relating to the subject, so that we may know exactly what the terms are?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes.

MR. GRAHAM MURRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the emoluments of Law Officers in other parts of the United Kingdom?

[No answer was given.]

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: May I ask the Secretary to the Treasury when the Return ordered by the House of the payments made to the Law Officers of the Crown of the last three years will be laid on the Table?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I will get the information for the hon. Member.

MR. POWELL WILLIAMS: It is necessary we should have it immediately.

THE FINANCE BILL.

MR. BARTLEY: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will explain why the Budget Bill this year is called "The Finance Bill," and not, as has been usual for many years, "The Customs and Inland Revenue Bill;" and whether, for the convenience of future reference, he will consent to call it by its old name, or "The Customs, Inland Revenue, and Finance Bill"?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Bill now before the House is called the Finance Bill as a short title to indicate that it contains all the provisions relating to the finance of the year, as well as those relating to the Customs and Inland Revenue. The propriety of embracing the whole finance of the year in one Bill was much considered in the year 1861, after the rejection of the Bill for the repeal of the Paper Duty by the House of Lords. It has been thought well to adopt the present title in order to give effect to this policy.

Mr. BARTLEY: Are we to understand that it is intended to permanently change the name of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Yes, Sir, for a short title, I hope. That is founded on what Mr. Disraeli said in a discussion which took place in 1861. Mr. Disraeli then said—

> "I come, Sir, to the second mode of defending our rights suggested by my right hon. Friend and, I take it, adopted in the Resolution—that is, by insisting that the whole of our financial scheme shall be embodied in one Bill. We do not—at least, I for one, and the Prime Minister for another, do not—question the right of the House of Lords to reject such a Bill, but, of course, the responsibility for such a step would, under these circumstances, be greatly enhanced, and the difficulty of disturbing the financial arrangements of the House of Commons proportionately be increased."

SCOTTISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPERIAL REVENUE.

Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will now state when the Government will appoint the Select Committee, promised by him on the 15th of March, to inquire into the financial relations of Scotland to the other Divisions of the United Kingdom and to the Imperial Exchequer?

Dr. MACGREGOR (Inverness-shire): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Scotland now pays much more than her fair share of Imperial taxation?

Sir W. HARCOURT: That is a matter about to be inquired into judicially, and I should not like to forestall the decision to be arrived at. I stated some time ago that it was intended by the Government to open such an inquiry, but it is impossible that it should go on at the same time as the Irish inquiry, because the officials of the Treasury would really be the principal witnesses at both inquiries.

Mr. COCHRANE: Why should not the inquiry as to Scotland be taken before that relating to Ireland?

[No answer was given.]

1st CAITHNESS VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY CORPS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: On behalf of the hon. Member for Caithness, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what was the strength of the 1st Caithness Volunteer Artillery Corps and of each company of it at the end of the years 1887, 1888, and 1893; whether there is a Financial Committee; and, if so, is it elected by the corps according to the Volunteer Regulations, or by whom has it been appointed; whether the abstract of the accounts has been posted up in some public place for the inspection of the members of the corps, in accordance with the Regulations; and why the General Meeting of the corps, ordered by the War Office on the 7th of December, 1892, to consider the alteration of its Rules, has not yet been convened by the Commanding Officer?

***Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: The strength of the 1st Caithness Volunteer Artillery was 634 in 1887, 621 in 1888, and 430 in 1893. Stated by companies in the several years the strength was:—Wick Companies, 163, 147, 56; Thurso Companies, 166, 162, 128; Mey Company, 89, 57, 56; Castleton Company, 91, 92, 71; Helmsdale Company, 66, 78, 76; Golspie Company, 79, 85, 43. One of the Wick companies is disbanded from the commencement of the present financial year. A Finance Committee is provided for by the Rules of the corps; but it does not appear that it has been actually appointed, and the finances of the several companies have been administered by their respective captains. As this arrangement is contrary to the general Regulations for the Volunteers, the Commanding Officer was instructed to call a General Meeting to modify the existing Rules and constitute a more workable Finance Committee. As a previous General Meeting had refused to alter the Rules the Commanding Officer thought it useless to summon another for the purpose. He has now been instructed to have such a meeting without delay, and explanations have also been called for. It is stated that the accounts of the corps are exhibited at its headquarters in the Armoury and Orderly room.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can fix a day for Committee on the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill?

SIR W. HARCOURT (who replied) said: No, Sir; I am not able to make any arrangement at present.

EVICTIONS IN SOUTH LEITRIM.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, on the 5th of April last, Thomas Carrigan was evicted from his holding at Stradrenan, Drumreilly, South Leitrim, at the suit of his landlord, Mr. Marsham Jones; that this tenant has been five years in occupation, and paid a year's rent every year during that period, but his receipts being back-dated by the agent, Mr. Hewson, he was decreed for six years' arrears of rent; whether he is aware that Carrigan offered to pay one and a-half year's rent, but his offer was rejected, and Carrigan and his family forced out by the police under the command of District Inspector Tyrrell, Ballinamore, who brandished his sword and compelled his men to enter the house, and eject the inmates by force; and whether similar proceedings on the part of the police will be sanctioned by the Executive pending the passage of the Evicted Tenants' Bill into law?

MR. J. MORLEY: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to defer this question till to-morrow, in order to enable me to complete some further inquiries which I have directed to be made.

HOURS OF LABOUR ON SCOTCH RAILWAYS.

MR. W. WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any complaints under the Railway Servants (Hours of Labour) Act have been made by Scotch railway servants; if so, how many, and against what Railway Companies, have such complaints been made?

MR. MUNDELLA: Three "representations" under the Act have been received from Scotland and are being dealt with. Two affect different classes of servants of the North British, and the third, drivers and firemen of the Caledonian.

MR. W. WHITELAW: Are they being dealt with to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade?

MR. MUNDELLA: They are being dealt with now.

ARMY EXAMINATIONS.

MR. SEXTON: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Donegal, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Civil Service Commissioners, who have recently issued Regulations to hold examinations of Irish candidates for the commissions in the Army in Dublin, still continue to hold the practical part of the Army examinations in London; whether the examination held in London is mainly, if not exclusively, a *vivâ voce* examination, which lasts in the majority of cases only a short time; and whether, having regard to the inconvenience and expense entailed on candidates by the holding of a portion of the examinations in London, steps will be taken to have these examinations in all their departments held in Dublin?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The new arrangement has been made with the object of reducing the expenses of candidates, who will now only have to be in London for a few days, instead of, as hitherto, for nearly a fortnight; but it has not been found practicable to have the oral and practical examinations at local centres.

MR. SEXTON: Why not?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The reason is that, if it is an oral examination and is held at different places, it is obviously impossible to equalise competition. If it is an examination conducted by papers only, the written answers can be sent to headquarters and be judged on a uniform principle.

FOREIGN DEATH DUTIES.

Mr. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): I wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question of which I have not given him notice, but which he may be able to answer. Has the right hon. Gentleman at the Treasury, or, if not, will he be able to procure, information as to the Death Duties imposed by foreign countries—for instance, France and Germany — upon the property of Englishmen domiciled in England but holding part of their property abroad; and also with reference to the duty imposed by those countries upon Englishmen domiciled abroad but holding part of their property in England; and, generally, any information with regard to foreign countries as to what duties are imposed upon Englishmen?

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will give similar information concerning the Colonies?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I can at once give some information with regard to the Colonies. I saw on Saturday a Bill referring to New Zealand, in which a duty of 8 per cent. was charged upon sums of £80,000. It is easy to get at the Colonial Office the information with regard to the Colonies, but, as far as foreign countries are concerned, I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman will kindly put his question upon the Paper, and I then will endeavour to get the information from the Foreign Office.

TITHE RENT CHARGE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): May I ask what will happen under the Welsh Disestablishment Bill to the part of the clerically appropriated tithe rent charge which does not go to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?

Mr. ASQUITH: Having only just received notice of the question, I have not had time to look into the matter, but I believe the figures I gave the other night represent the whole of the tithe rent charge, whether going to clerical impropriators or to lay impropriators.

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

Mr. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he proposes to lay upon the Table of the House a Return of Parliamentary Voters for Scotland and Ireland, in the same form as that already presented in Parliamentary Paper, No. 40, for England and Wales?

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): At the same time I will ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government will give a Return showing the population and electorate of the Irish and Scotch constituencies, similar to that which has just been issued for England and Wales?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. George Russell, North Beds.): I have been asked to answer this question. The desired Return for Scotland was issued last year (see Parliamentary Paper, No. 340, of last Session). My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland informs me that there will be no objection to the issue of a similar Return for Ireland.

MOTION.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Mr. ASQUITH: In asking for leave to introduce a Bill to amend and extend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops, I wish to say that although I do not propose to introduce it at length, it is not because in the view of the Government this is an unimportant Bill. The explanation is that, in point of principle, it is not at all contentious, but in point of detail it deals in a somewhat complicated way with a number of particular industries, and therefore it is hardly a Bill which could be conveniently discussed until it is printed and circulated, which I hope it will be to-morrow. The Bill proposes to make Amendments in the general law relating to factories and workshops as to their sanitary conditions and safety. It defines overcrowding to mean an allowance of less than 250 cubic feet of space per man, and after 8 o'clock in the evening 400 cubic feet. It gives power to the Courts, where premises are structurally unfit for a particular process, to require the necessary alterations to be made, and it prohibits the cleaning of machinery in motion by women and young persons, in addition to children, as at present. Next, as to the time of employment, the Bill provides that overtime, which is now capable of being allowed five days in any week, shall not be allowed on more than three days; and it restricts the employment outside the factory, in the business of the factory, of children, women, and young persons—that is to say, if the child has been employed in the factory during the daytime, it is not to be allowed to take out work to do at home; and similarly women and young persons are not to be allowed to take out work if they are employed in the factory. The Bill proposes to include in the law as to factories and workshops certain industries which are not at present embraced; such, for instance, as laundries. Steam laundries are to be deemed factories, and other laundries are to be deemed workshops; and special provisions are made for the ventilation of steam laundries and the keeping of the floors, &c., drained. There are exceptions for what are called domestic laundries and laundries belonging to institutions, which will be under the general law. As to docks, wharves, and places where buildings are being temporarily constructed, they are brought for the first time under those provisions of the Factory Act which deal with inspection, fencing of machinery, and notice of accident. Thirdly, and lastly, the Bill proposes in the case of what are called tenement factories, which are common in Sheffield and that part of the country—factories where different parts of the building are let out to small occupiers—to make the owner responsible for the sanitary condition of the factory, the fencing of the machinery, and a number of matters of that kind. In the case of dangerous and unhealthy employments, the Bill gives power to the Secretary of State, in addition to his present powers, to restrict the hours of employment, and altogether to forbid the employment of women, young persons, and children. Finally, the Bill proposes to amend, or rather to substitute, for what is called the "particulars" clause in the Act of 1891, a new clause, which will apply that enactment to all piece-workers in the textile trades, and which will require employers in those trades to supply to every worker paid by the piece a plain definite form, in writing, giving such particulars as will enable the operative to compute the wages payable to him in respect of each piece handed over to him to work upon. I hope the House will now consent to read the Bill a first time on the understanding that ample time will be given before the Second Reading is taken, and that ultimately it will be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend and extend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Motion agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and Mr. George Russell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 204.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH (WALES) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [26th April],

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the temporalities thereof.—(*Mr. Secretary Asquith.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon, &c.) said that, while congratulating the Government on the introduction of the Bill, he wished to offer a few criticisms on several sweeping statements which had been made by Members of the Opposition. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight stated that the Nonconformist Bodies and the English Church in Wales were about equally divided; several hon. Members asserted that in Wales Nonconformity was a declining force, and that the Church was increasing in influence and in numbers; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol said that Wales had never had a separate national existence, and that nothing in history could support the claim for a separate Welsh nationality. Those were very sweeping statements, and upon them rested the whole case for a special Bill. But he thought they had a right to complain that not one single shred of argument, one historical fact, or one tittle of evidence had been adduced in support of those statements. As he had not the slightest doubt that every one of these statements would be repeated in every town and village throughout the country during the next 18 months, no apology was required from a Welsh Member for taking steps to at once repudiate them. As to the first, he ventured to say that if it were true that the Church and Nonconformity were about equally divided in Wales, it meant that at the last General Election, and at several previous Elections, the sentiment in favour of disestablishment must have been so strong that no less than tens of thousands of Churchmen must have voted for the disestablishment of the Church. Honesty would not permit him to accept that statement. Several speakers had commented on the assertion that the Welsh Nonconformists had refused to assent to the taking of a Religious Census. He had the official Returns of the number of registered members of the particular denominations in Wales. Now, what were the numbers? The Church claimed to have four dioceses. The number of its communicants——

Mr. TALBOT: What is the hon. Gentleman quoting from?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: From the official Returns of the communicants of the Church.

Mr. TALBOT: Where do they come from?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: From *The Contemporary Review* of this month, supplied by a statistician, whose authority, I am sure, hon. Gentlemen opposite will not dispute—namely, Mr. Darlington, a gentleman who has gone into the question thoroughly.

An hon. Member: The figures are not "official."

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said, the aggregate number of the communicants of the Church came to 117,900, or 6 per cent. of the population. The aggregate number of Nonconformists was 402,840, or 23 per cent. of the population. So that the Nonconformists were in the proportion of three, or almost four, to one of the Church communicants. That did not support the statement made so liberally on the other side that Nonconformists and Churchmen were in equal proportions.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): The hon. Member says he has an official Return. I should like to know if there were official enumerators? ["Order, order!"]

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said, this was not the only statement made on the other side. They were told not merely that Churchmen and Nonconformists were about equal, but that Nonconformity was a declining force, while the Church was increasing in numbers. Some figures, which were not very relevant, were given in support of that startling proposition. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir R. Webster) had quoted the Returns of the Nonconformist chapels from 1884 to 1886 inclusive. The very selection of that period showed the partial method and tactics of the Church Party, because these were the lowest years in the Nonconformist Returns, and there was a practical reason for it. There was great depression in trade at industrial centres. Thousands of working men—who constituted, after all, the bulk of the Nonconformists in Wales—had to leave for England, and some for America. The Church Party selected those years of depression in the history of Dissent as a fair sample of progress, but that was a thoroughly discreditable method of endeavouring to support a case. Still, he found that in 1886 the Methodists alone increased by 6,401, whilst the Church increased by 5,910; so that even in a year of great depression for Nonconformists, one denomination alone increased its adherents by 500 more than the Church. But he did not consider it fair to take one year. They ought to take at least 10 or 20 years in order to judge of the increase of the respective forces in Wales. If they did that, what would they find? Taking the years from 1872 to 1892, they found that the Methodists and the Baptists—the two bodies selected and singled out for the purpose of comparison by the other side—had increased as follows:—

The Methodists in 1872 were 95,000, and in 1892 had increased to 140,000, or an increase of 40 per cent.; and the Baptists in 1872 were 63,000, and in 1892 had increased to 97,000, or an increase of 57 per cent. In the face of this they were told that Nonconformity was a declining force in Wales. With regard to Nonconformity as a whole, there had been an increase of 40 per cent. in the number of adherents. But they were told that there was a marked decline in the subscriptions of Dissenting Bodies. He had the aggregate contributions of the Methodists in 1869 and 1889—and he regretted that in theshort time he had had at his disposal he had been unable to get hold of the contributions of the Baptists. The official Returns of the Methodists showed that in 1869 the amount collected was £104,000, and in 1889 it was £182,000, or an increase of 73 per cent. That did not look as though in that 20 years Nonconformity was a declining force in Wales. Well, what about the Church? He maintained that Nonconformity was not declining in comparison with the Church, and that its rate of progress, as compared with that of the Church, was great. In 1851 there was an official Census taken of the attendance at the different places of worship in Wales—and he was sure that the defenders of the Church in the House would not state that this attendance was under-estimated. It was found that the Church attendances amounted to 132,000, or only 21 per cent. of the total attendances. The Nonconformist attendances, exclusive of Roman Catholics, amounted to 484,000, or 78 per cent. of the whole. That was the proportion then. What was the proportion now? It was this—Church, 22 per cent.; Nonconformist, 77 per cent.; so that there was barely a perceptible increase in favour of the Church. That was not to be surprised at. Nonconformity in 1851 was in its full vigour, whereas the Church was only beginning, as it were, to awaken to new life, and it would naturally be expected that the progress of the Church would be more marked than that of Nonconformity. So much for that part of the argument. But the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells had used another argument to prove the decline of Nonconformity, and it was that the Church was making converts from Dissent. He flaunted the case of the few hundred Baptists in South Wales and the eight Nonconformist ministers, whose names had never been supplied in spite of repeated demands for particulars. In the diocese of St. Asaph there were said to be 16 of these conversions of ministers, but no names had been supplied. This proselytism in Wales was the strongest possible argument for disestablishment. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol had thought fit to charge the opponents of Church establishment with envy and jealousy of the Church, and to say that those were the two motives which influenced them in agitating for disestablishment. What must be the state of mind of anyone who charged hundreds of thousands of his fellow-citizens with acting from the meanest and most malignant motives that ever darkened the human heart?

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I did not do that.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said, that the vast majority of the Welsh people had recorded votes in favour of disestablishment. There were other motives which induced Welsh Nonconformists to protest against action which involved an inference as to the inferiority of dissent. These clerical gentlemen, who were maintained at the public expense, went to people who had received religious instruction under the best Sunday school system, he fancied, in the whole Kingdom, and who had received spiritual counsel and advice from one of the finest races of preachers that had ever appeared, at all events in Wales, and treated them as if they were devoid of the very elements of religious truth, and as if they were as proper subjects for conversion as pagan idolaters in the heart of Africa. Was it to be wondered at that the Welsh Nonconformists resented such action? These clerical gentlemen went to men and women who had spent their lives as members of religious communities, and had led perfectly consistent and pure lives, and tried to induce them to cut themselves adrift from their religious associations in order that they might be registered among the assets of this company in Wales. They knew that there was an application for a winding-up order, and that it was very important that the balance-sheet should look well.

Therefore every agent of this company did his very best to get in every Nonconformist he could possibly lay his hands on in order to make the balance-sheet as favourable as possible. Was it a matter for surprise that Nonconformist farmers, whose lot was hard enough, should object to be forced by law to contribute £200,000 a year towards subsidising a horde of raiders who were invading their territories and trying to capture them? The present proselytising system was creating a good deal of natural bitterness, and was, he thought, the strongest possible argument in favour of disestablishment and disendowment. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) had said that Wales never had a separate national existence. The right hon. Gentleman had not, however, suggested a single argument in support of that contention. The right hon. Gentleman, when he was down at Carnarvon, admitted that there was a separate national spirit in Wales, although he said it was a disembodied spirit. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir R. Webster) admitted in his speech that Wales had national traditions, so that the national spirit had at least the power of expression. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) was perfectly prepared to admit a separate Wales for intermediate education and even for Sunday closing, but he was not prepared to have a separate Wales for disestablishment. But nationality surely was a question of fact. Either there was a separate Wales, or there was not. The right hon. Gentleman had invented a new species of fact—a considerable fact—a fact that was only a fact as long as it was not adduced in evidence. It might even be adduced in evidence in favour of a claim for intermediate education or Sunday closing, but the moment it was adduced in favour of disestablishment, not only, according to the right hon. Gentleman, did it cease to be a fact, but it never had any existence at all. Was it surprising that there were three nationalities in the House of Commons who thought they could govern themselves better than they could be governed by gentlemen whose ideas of nationality were as crude as this? No one could read the history of Wales for 10 minutes without discovering that she had a separate national existence. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the Turnpike Acts, Intermediate Education and Sunday Closing Acts, but what about the Coercion Acts that were passed for centuries in order to keep Wales down; what about the Act of Union between Wales and England?

An hon. MEMBER: What was the date of it?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said, the Act was passed in the reign of Henry VIII., and he would give the hon. Member the date later on. It was an Act of Union between the Principality Dominion of Wales and the Kingdom of England. Was not that a recognition of separate nationality? It was, however, unnecessary to attempt further to prove a point with which any reader of history was acquainted. As to the Bill as a whole, he thought it was generally accepted by the Welsh people as being a highly statesmanlike measure. At the same time, he fancied that there was a strong feeling against what were known as the Compensation Clauses. The Government proposed, as he understood, to leave the clergy in full possession and enjoyment of their life interest for the rest of their days. He considered such treatment to be too indulgent and too generous, and he thought it would inflict a considerable hardship and injustice upon the Welsh people. It meant the postponement of the full operation of the Bill in the vast majority of Welsh parishes. He did not consider that the Government had any justification for propounding such a scheme. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Asquith), in proposing the Bill, treated the establishment as a State institution, the clergy as State officials, and the property as State property. Whenever the Government discharged any set of officials they of course compensated them for any loss they might suffer by being thrown upon an overcrowded market, but he had never heard of any Government assuming that officials in the prime of life were so thoroughly handicapped against obtaining other appointments that they ought to be provided with the full measure of their income for the rest of their lives. Something must be done undoubtedly to compensate these men for the losses they must necessarily sustain. They had been turned out of a certain profession and had suddenly to find other means of employment, and that undoubtedly might cause them some loss, but he did not think the Government were justified in securing them in their appointments for the rest of their lives. The Government propose to utilise the property that would be placed at their disposal for the purpose of the social regeneration of rural life in Wales. In a small country like theirs £200,000 would go a long way. The Government, however, proposed to postpone the operation of their scheme of social regeneration. He contended that they were not justified in doing so, and that the fact of their doing so would be a hardship even to the clergy. The right hon. Gentleman, in introducing the Bill, said that the Establishment in Wales was creating a good deal of exasperation and disturbance. If the Bill were passed in its present shape, instead of removing the causes of disturbance it would increase and intensify them, because the people would have an inducement to create disturbances in order to get rid of the clergy. In what way did the Government justify the course they proposed to take? They said that the clergy had vested interests which were life interests. It must, however, be remembered that these life interests were not disposable. The right hon. Gentleman had based his compensation to the owners of rights of presentation upon the marketable value of such rights. He did not, however, propose to apply the same test to the life interest of clergymen. What was the marketable value of a clergymen's interest? It was *nil*. The clergyman could not dispose of it; he was bound to reside on his property and to devote the whole of his energies and time to the service of the parish, and he could not leave the parish except for a month or two without special licence. The property, therefore, was mortgaged, as it were, up to the hilt, and was not disposable. Yet the Government proposed to give the same liberal compensation for the loss of it as they would give if it were an unencumbered and perfectly fair life interest.

[MR. ASQUITH here interposed a remark which did not reach the Reporters' Gallery.]

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said, he thought that made the case worse, and that it gave away the whole case for the Bill. The case for the Bill was that the services performed by these clergymen were not needed, and that the fact that Nonconformist farmers paid for those services was the cause of exasperation and bitterness. Yet the Government were going to perpetuate a system which they admitted to be a thoroughly bad one. He said they were simply giving away any case they might have for the Bill by postponing its operation for a whole generation. What had the Welsh clergy done for Wales that would entitle them to this extraordinary indulgent treatment at the hands of a Welsh people, and at their expense? A Bill had been introduced for the disestablishment of the Scotch Church, and he believed the proposals of the two Bills were the same with regard to vested interests; but there was a great distinction between the two cases. There was no doubt that the clergy of the Scotch Church were entitled to very tender treatment. The Scotch Church was a thoroughly National Church. It was a Church which had been founded by the Scotch people, and its clergy had always been in the forefront of any struggle for the upholding of the national honour. These things could not be said of the Welsh Church, which was a thoroughly anti-national Church—a Church which had been forced upon Wales by Norman Kings, and a Church whose whole history had been a history of warfare against Welsh nationality. It was a Church which throughout its whole career had grossly neglected its spiritual functions. Under these circumstances, he was of opinion that the indulgent treatment proposed by the right hon. Gentleman was far too liberal and generous. He should like to quote a few authorities to the House to show that the Welsh Church had been an anti-national Church. He would, in the first instance, give an authority which would be received, he believed, even by Members opposite. He referred to Archdeacon Pryce, who was a consistent opponent of Welsh disestablishment, but who had written the best history of the ancient British Church ever published. Archdeacon Pryce said—

> "The subjection of the Welsh Church brought with it evils that have been perpetuated through many generations down to the 19th century. It was the policy of the Norman Kings

to stamp out the Welsh national sentiment with a view to assimilation with their English subjects; and, unfortunately, the Episcopate in Wales was made the instrument for carrying out this policy."

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): But that was the Church of Rome.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said, it was the Church of which this Church in Wales was the successor. It was the argument of hon. Members opposite that the teaching was continuous. The writer went on to say that in pursuance of the policy indicated the Bishops appointed in Wales were generally alien, antagonistic to the national sentiment, and prepared to obey the behests of English Kings, connection by blood with the Welsh Princes being disqualification for episcopal office. That was a quotation out of a book written by an eminent dignitary of the Church in Wales, who pronounced this Church to have been anti-national for centuries, who said that the Bishops of the Church were in the nature of policemen and spies upon the Welsh people, who were simply there to watch their movements, and to report anything in the nature of a tendency towards insurrection. It might be urged that this was a matter of ancient history, but unfortunately it was not so, for what was known as the Anglicising policy was the policy of the Church at the present moment. On this point he could quote the authority of another treatise written by a distinguished clergyman of the Church of Wales, also an opponent of disestablishment, and consequently an impartial and unprejudiced witness. What did this ecclesiastic say? He said—

> "That the Anglicising section of the Church dominated its policy at the present moment, and had done so for centuries. The aim of that Anglicising policy was to stifle the sentiment of Welsh nationality, and this Anglicising section within the Church sought to obtain its purpose of attempting to assimilate the Church in Wales to that in England by depreciating the Welsh language and literature, ... by deriding Welsh patriotism, despising Welsh nationality, and even by attempting sometimes to disprove its very existence."

That was the description given only last year by a Welsh clergyman (the Rev. David Jones) of the Anglicising and denationalising policy pursued by this party to the Welsh people, and yet they were told this Church was to be tenderly treated at the expense of the Welsh peasants because it was their property. ["No!"] It was the property of the Welsh people given to a perfectly independent Church, taken away from that Church and given to an anti-national Church in spite of the protests of the Welsh people, and it was only now their claims were being listened to by a British Parliament for restitution of that property. Hon. Gentlemen might say they believed in an Anglicising policy in Wales, but he could reply to them in the words of Archdeacon Howell, who stated a short time ago that to attempt to denationalise the Welsh was to attempt to demoralise a nation. He could not conceive any deeper injury which they could inflict than to destroy that individuality of character, that sense of self-respect, that true manliness of spirit, which was the possession of every nation which had traditions, literature, and a language of its own. Yet that was what had been attempted by members of this Church from the 12th century downwards. Its consistent policy had been to destroy Welsh nationality; to use their spiritual position for the purpose of Anglicising the national sentiment of Wales. During the whole period of its history it had grossly neglected its spiritual functions. Hon. Members opposite seemed to assume that the neglect of its religious work was simply a feature of the latter part of the 18th century; but that was not so. Let them touch the history of the Church at any point, and they would not find a trace of any of those qualities which tended to make a great Religious Body. The hon. Member proceeded to read the Petition sent by the Welsh Princes in the 13th century to the Pope, in which the Princes complained that the Archbishop of Canterbury sent them English Bishops who were ignorant of the manners and language of the Welsh people, and who could not preach the Word of God to the people nor receive their confessions but through interpreters. The Bishops, the petitioners stated, neither loved them nor their land, but persecuted and oppressed them.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: May I ask if the hon. Member attempts to blame the Reformed Church of England for the doings of England when it was Romish?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said, the hon. Member endeavoured to distinguish between the Church of England in the 13th century and the present Church. He wondered if English Conservative Members were prepared to take that view? At the date of what was called its amalgamation, according to the hon. Member, it was a Romish Church. That meant it could not be the successor of the ancient British Church, because that was an independent Church. During the whole course of its existence the Church in Wales had been the persistent enemy of Welsh nationality, while it had grossly neglected its spiritual functions. It was said that at the present time the Church was active and energetic, and that it was a growing Church. But what did that mean? It meant that what this Church would not perform from a sense of duty to its people and to the religion of which it was the sole exponent, directly its social ascendency, emoluments, and privileges were attacked it was stimulated into activity and energy. It was stimulated into activity by the presence of the very forces which now rendered its existence unnecessary. Nonconformity had provided for the spiritual wants of the people; it had its chapel in every glen and hillside. There was no necessity now for subsidising this Church, even if the principle of religious establishment were admitted at all. There was nothing to be said for a Church which could only be stirred into anything like activity when its corruption reached such a point that there was a revolt of the whole people against it. That was the case of the Church in Wales. He would not willingly offend any man in the matter of his creed, and he believed the Church of England was a great Church and had exercised a beneficial influence on the destinies of the English race; but it was for him to speak as a Welshman of what this Church had been in Wales, and he said that during the whole history of the Church in Wales she had been the enemy of the common people. She had betrayed the household which had extended hospitality to her by acting the spy; she had betrayed the people whose spiritual interests were committed to her charge by endeavouring to stamp them out as a nationality from amongst the nations of the Empire. She had betrayed the religion of which she was the sole exponent in Wales by bringing disgrace upon its authors, and he protested most earnestly against postponing projects for the amelioration of the condition of the Welsh nation for the purpose of extending exceptional indulgence to an establishment the priesthood of which, during the whole of their career, had simply had one record of betrayal of that nation's highest interests.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Speaker, the defence of this Bill appears to have been put by the Government into commission. The exposition of its details was made in a speech of masterly lucidity by the Minister in charge of the Bill. The defence of its principles is apparently left to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, and I do not know what the Home Secretary thought of the method in which his general views upon the question of disestablishment were presented to the House and the nation by the exponent of Welsh Nonconformity who has just addressed us. The speech of the hon. Gentleman divides itself—very unequally I admit—into two parts. The one dealt with the details of the Bill; the other dealt with the reasons for passing the Bill. With regard to what he said about the details of the Bill I need not detain the House, for the whole of that part of his speech was occupied in explaining that it was one of the worst Bills which ever was conceived, and that the result of it must be, not to bring that peace to Wales prophesied for the Bill by the Home Secretary, but to plunge Wales into discord even greater than that in which she is now; and when the Home Secretary sought, in a humble interruption, to defend his case, the only response with which he was greeted by the hon. Gentleman was that by that interruption the Home Secretary had given the whole case for the Bill away. It is not for me to defend the Bill against the attack of the hon. Gentleman. All I need to do before coming to the Bill itself, and before leaving the speech of the hon. Gentleman, is to deal very briefly with some of the general considerations which he laid before us. The hon. Gentleman began, as I suppose he was in duty bound to begin, with a discussion of the relative strength of the various Religious Denominations in Wales. He gave us, in defence of his particular view, what he described as official statistics, which proved that the strength of the Established Church was far less than its defenders on this side of the House suppose. But when we asked him what was the source of these official statistics it turned out that it was an article in *The Contemporary Review*, a very able and influential journal, but not a journal which has yet risen to the dignity of a Blue Book, or which we are obliged to accept as an authentic record of facts officially ascertained. But I do not mean to enter into any contest with the hon. Gentleman in regard to these figures. I think we have wasted a great deal of time over them, for, after all, I have to point out to the House that, in the first place, our decision ought not to depend upon the relative numbers of the various denominations concerned. I have to point out, in the second place, that it does not lie in the mouths of hon. Gentlemen opposite to use that language so long as they refuse the Religious Census for which we have constantly asked. When there is a controversy as to whether accounts have been cooked or not, without examination you are safe to give it against the persons who refuse to allow these accounts to be examined, and so long as hon. Gentlemen from Wales show their terror of the Religious Census by practically making it impossible for any Government to do for Wales what has long been done without protest for Ireland, so long we are justified in saying they dare not have a Religious Census, because they know the result of that Census would destroy their case. Having dealt with the official records contained in *The Contemporary Review*, the hon. Gentleman went on to give his views of Welsh history, and most astonishing views they were. I do not know whether any professional and competent historians were in the House when he was speaking—whether, for instance, the right hon. Member for Aberdeen or any person of like authority was present. But it does not require one to be a competent historian to know that the hon. Member has drawn entirely upon his own fancy when he has pictured his independent Wales as existing at some period unknown and unspecified in the remote darkness of the Middle Ages. The hon. Gentleman did not give us, so far as I recollect, one single date or one single authority, except a stray reference to an Act, which I confess I had never heard of before, which he described as the Act of Union with Wales. We know of the Act of Union with Scotland and of the Act of Union with Ireland, but certainly none of us heard on either side, until he gave us the information, that there ever had been an Act of Union for Wales. I cannot help recalling in that connection a statement made by the right hon. Member for Midlothian not so very long ago, when he informed the House

> "That Wales had never been dealt with separately or on any separate principle in any Reform Bill,"

and

> "That distinctions between England and Wales except in the recital of an Act of Parliament, for the purpose of indicating their unity, it totally unknown to our Constitution."

However, as the hon. Gentleman did refer me to this Act of Union for Wales, I asked a friend to procure it from the Library. I do not require to read the whole statute, which is a long one, but the House will, perhaps, be interested with a few words from its preamble. This is the statute, apparently, which indicates the separate character of Wales as a nationality, and is the foundation of her freedom. It begins thus—

> "Albeit the Dominion, Principality, and country of Wales justly and righteously is and ever hath been incorporated, annexed, united, and subject to, and under the Imperial Crown of the realm . . . and also because that the people of the same Dominion have and do daily use a speech nothing like or consonant to the natural mother tongue used within this realm, and because some rude and ignorant people have made distinction and diversity between the King's subjects of this realm and his subjects of the said Dominion and Principality of Wales . . . His Highness therefore of a singular zeal, love, and favour that he beareth towards his subjects of his said Dominion of Wales," desires "utterly to extirp all and singular the sinister usages and customs differing from the same, and to bring the said subjects of this his realm, and of his said Dominion of Wales to an amicable concord and unity."

I really think the hon. Gentleman should have carefully looked at this charter of Welsh liberties before he led us to think that there were, I will not say rude, but still ignorant persons, who, in the words of the statute, did make a distinction and diversity between

> "The King's subjects of this realm and his subjects of the said Dominion and Principality."

Now the third and last point which the hon. Member made consisted in an attack upon the English Church in Wales for the neglect of its duties and a comparison between it and the Nonconformist Bodies very much to the advantage of the latter. I do not mean to follow the hon. Gentleman through the embittered controversy which he initiated, and certainly I am not going to use towards the Nonconformist Bodies in Wales epithets and phrases which he was not ashamed—though he ought to have been ashamed—to use towards the members of that great communion which he was attacking. But I will only say, so far as my information goes, that there is in this respect an honourable rivalry between all the Christian denominations in Wales to do their work and to do their duty, and no denomination in Wales has a right to say that its own work is perfect, and that even the Nonconformist Bodies, so ably represented by the hon. Gentleman, have by the mouths of authorities not less than himself expressed their own view that the reason of the present crisis might be that the Nonconformist Bodies were falling behind their Established brethren in the great work in which they are both concerned. Mr. J. R. Davies, a gentleman who, I believe, was lately a Member of this House, speaking as Chairman of the Welsh Nonconformist Conference at Carnarvon, only two years ago, used, as I am informed, this sentence—

> "I doubt at times whether dissent has not done its work. One thing that inclines me to this opinion is the fact that the great aim of the sects at present is the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England in Wales—an aim wholly political, a low aim for the Church of the living God, and the fact that they are swallowed up by so worldly an aim is itself an admission and a condemnation of their spiritual destitution."

It is not my business, and I am not going, to express agreement or disagreement with a statement made upon the authority of the Chairman of this Nonconformist meeting, but, at all events, it may teach, it should teach, the hon. Gentleman and his friends some greater humility of statement than he has permitted himself to-day, and may induce him to believe that the case against the Church in Wales is not to be defended upon some wrong, real or imaginary, that occurred in the 13th century, but is to be measured by the comparative work both the Church and Nonconformists are doing now in the cause of true religion. If he takes that as the measure of his comparison, I think, whatever may be the result of his studies, he will not again permit himself, either in this House or on a Welsh platform, to use the violent and bitter terms of reproach he has to-day hurled against men whom he evidently regards more as political opponents than as men engaged in a work with which he as a Christian gentleman ought to sympathise. Now, Sir, I pass to a very brief review of the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has laid before us, and I shall deal with it chiefly in respect of those points in which a different plan has been adopted from that when the Irish Church was disestablished. I shall at once touch on that part of the Bill which deals with matters connected with the Church establishment, and then with the provisions of the Bill in so far as they affect the general community. The first point on which I have to attack the proposals of the Government is the least important. It is that which is raised by their proposal in regard to Church patronage. The Government have fixed in this Bill one year's income as the proper compensation to be given to patrons, and they found themselves upon the action taken by the Conservative Government in 1874, in relation to the Scotch Act, and the right hon. Gentleman with a happy mimicry was glad to say he had shielded himself under the precedent set by Lord Beaconsfield in that year. But the right hon. Gentleman does not only desire to disestablish the Welsh Church, but he is a Scotch Member, and as a Scotch Member he ought to know—he must know—something of the circumstances which made one year a full measure of compensation in the case of Scotland, while it is an inequitable and unjust measure in the case of Wales. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he will not find a time, I believe, in the generation following the Act of 1843 when there was one single case in which the next presentation in Scotland was sold at all? There is, therefore, no estimate to be derived from the outside market as to the value of those presentations. In the second place, is he not aware that in 1843 an Act was passed modifying permanently the law in the Scotch Church, and practically giving parishioners the power to make objection to the presentee; and to have that objection tried before a competent tribunal, and, naturally, under those circumstances, the market value, if it ever existed, for advowsons was entirely destroyed, so that there is no parallel whatever between the case of Scotland and the cases of England or Wales, to which the right hon. Gentleman desires to apply that precedent? But that is not all. The House may not be aware that the Lord Chancellor, under a recent statute, has been empowered, and has used that power, of selling presentations in his gift. That ought to give us some measure of what advowsons sell for. Has the Government investigated what price these advowsons fetch in the market, and, if they have done so, will they give us some particulars with regard to them? I want to know if these advowsons have been sold in Wales by the English Chancellor under the statute passed by the British Parliament, by what right do you take away these advowsons so bought at the miserable compensation fixed in this Bill? A grosser case of spoliation, I think, can hardly be conceived, and unless the right hon. Gentleman shows us by investigation of facts that the value in the market of these advowsons is what the Government estimate them at, he and his friends must be open to the charge of deliberately depriving those who have bought property under the laws of the land from legitimate protection in the use of it. That, as I said, is comparatively a small question, but the next is much more important. It relates to the curates; it is the measure of justice, or injustice, dealt out to the curates. The right hon. Gentleman very naturally and properly has made a study of what passed under the Irish Disestablishment Act of 1869, and he explained to the House that in the provisions of that Act the Irish curates got a great deal more than they ought to have got. The right hon. Gentleman used the occasion for levelling at the House of Lords one of those sneers with which we are familiar. The House of Lords, no doubt, did modify the original provisions of the Bill in respect to compensation to be given to these curates, but I observe that when the Amendment was discussed in this House the Minister in charge of the Bill—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—declared that the arrangements come to by the Lords were fair and reasonable. I, therefore, do not think it lies in the mouth of a Minister, so lately a colleague of the right hon. Gentleman, to make it a subject of complaint and accusation against the House of Lords that they had adopted this fair and reasonable arrangement. If the House of Lords were guilty—and I do not think it has been proved that they were guilty—of giving too favourable terms to curates, I want to know whether that is any justification for depriving these men of their just rights without any compensation at all. It is true that the Lords modified the original provisions in the Bill with regard to curates, but it is also true that in the Bill as originally introduced the rights and interests of these curates were dealt with, and I should like to know how the right hon. Gentleman can reconcile it with his sense of justice, or, at all events, with that measure of justice which those who introduced the Bill in 1869 thought ought to be meted out. There is something worse than giving too good terms to those who are dispossessed, and that is giving no terms at all, and treating them with the gross injustice which appears to be deliberately contemplated by this Bill. The next point of difference from the Irish Church—and all these points are points of difference for the worse—is that which relates to the provisions which the Government have made in regard to the cathedrals. It does appear to me to be their desire for no public object to inflict a deliberate insult on the Welsh Church. If they had set to work to contrive that insult they could not have done it better. The right hon. Gentleman said that the cathedrals are to be preserved as national monuments. At this moment, Sir, they would be national ruins if it had not been for the money the members of the English Church have lavishly spent in their restoration and preservation, and to hand the cathedrals over to these three gentlemen—of whom the Member who has just sat down would be one, and who spoke of the English clergymen as raiders, to hand them over to a Nonconformist body of persons who are to have possession of the cathedrals, and who are to allow those who have conducted worship in them for these hundreds of years to come in on licence to perform the services seems to me to be meting out a kind of treatment to the members of this great communion in Wales which must produce the profoundest irritation amongst them, and which can, as far as I can see, serve no public object. The right hon. Gentleman gave us some very obscure suggestions on this point. He told us that the members of the Church of England were to be allowed to celebrate their services in the cathedrals, but he did not tell us whether anybody else could do so. Therefore, it is open to conjecture whether the cathedrals are not to be handed over to every form of Christian worship or public ceremony. The fourth point on which this Bill differs from the Irish Bill is, in my opinion, the most important of all. The right hon. Gentleman told us that, in giving a 12 per cent. bonus on capitalisation or commutation, he feared that too favourable terms were offered to the Irish Church. I am not going to chicane about the exact percentage which ought to be allowed, or whether any should be allowed; but that you should make it easy for the Church in Wales to capitalise its property I have no doubt whatever. And, when I see the right hon. Gentleman put on the Table of the House a scheme by which capitalisation is rendered almost impossible, I am driven to the conclusion that the hatred of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway to their brother Christians is so great that, not content with depriving the Church of the whole of its property, they desire to deprive it of its property under circumstances and conditions which will make it as difficult as possible for that Church to do its work in the future. What will be the result? As you have framed your Bill the natural consequence of your provisions will be that each clergyman enjoying a freehold benefice will continue to the end of his life to enjoy it, and when he dies the whole property will be lost for ever to the Church of which he was a member. The only method of dealing with that is to ensure that the various incumbents should commute their life income for a capital sum to be devoted for ever to the use of the Church. But you make it almost impossible to carry out that operation at all, and quite impossible to carry it out on fair terms. And why? I will tell you. You allow every clergyman to enjoy his income in his benefice at an undiminished rate of remuneration during the term of his life, but if he leaves he has to pay a fine, a considerable fine, compared with his age. If, therefore, he goes to an Insurance Office to capitalise his interest in his benefice, he will only be able to capitalise, not upon the income which he is enjoying, but upon that reduced income which he must under any circumstances enjoy. That is not putting the 12 per cent. bonus on the commutation on capitalisation of the annual income; it is making a large discount—in fact, inflicting a heavy fine for carrying out that provision; and therefore I say that in this provision of the right hon. Gentleman there is not a desire to deal equitably with what he must admit is an ancient and an honourable institution, but a desire to destroy it—not merely to destroy it now, but for all time to come. More ungenerous treatment of those who at least might ask for justice—they do not ask for more—has never been meted out to any body of men whose recognised rights this House has had to deal with. I now leave the points in which this Bill differs from the Irish Bill for the worse, and I come to the points which affect the community, who are made the heirs and the legatees of the property which belongs to the Church. Here I have to criticise the Bill from the point of view of the public, the parochial system which the right hon. Gentleman has adopted. He says that the central national fund of the Irish Church has been abused by successive Governments, and that the fund has been gradually plundered until within a generation the whole has been squandered; so he has determined that no such abuse shall occur in this case; and therefore he has adopted a plan by which every parish shall be made for all time the heir to the tithes which are collected within its limits. I do not agree altogether with the criticism passed upon the uses to which the Irish Church Fund has been applied. There have been one or two cases in which a Government, in order to relieve itself of immediate difficulty, has put its hand into that national fund rather than draw upon the Imperial

Exchequer. I do not think that the Party to which I belong has committed those mistakes; but I do not desire to revive recollections of past controversies. When I remember that out of this fund you have created a great University in Dublin, and that out of it you have collected the resources for the Congested Districts Board, I say, looking at those two great objects and leaving out of account all minor ones, I do not think the fund has been wasted. I wish to know what security we have that, when these parishes are set squabbling over their share of the funds, and when the parishioners are set squabbling as to the purposes to which the money shall be applied, what guarantee is there that as large a proportion of jobbery and useless expenditure will not take place under the system of this Bill as has occurred under the Irish Church Act? That is not my main objection. My main objection is that the new plan is unworkable, in the first instance; and if it were workable it would produce boundless difficulties and endless controversies between all the parties who expect to share in the distribution of these endowments. I presume the right hon. Gentleman has looked into the figures, but I cannot believe that the various parties whose support is to be bought by their share of public plunder will be content with the result of their examination. However you take the figures—whether as between North and South Wales, or as between one county and another, or as between one parish and another—you will find inequalities and anomalies so glaring that I do not believe the results will ever be tolerated. Take two or three examples. The County of Glamorgan has a population of 693,000, or, say, 700,000, and the parochial tithe is £16,000. The County of Anglesey has a population of 35,000, and a parochial tithe of £12,064. Therefore, a population 20 times less has three-fourths of the same tithe. In other words, Anglesey has 15 times more tithe than she is entitled to on any just comparison of population. I dare say Anglesey will like that arrangement, but I am sure Glamorgan will not. Take two great industrial and mining counties and compare them with the rest of Wales. Glamorgan and Monmouth have a population of about 1,000,000, and the rest of Wales 800,000. Glamorgan and Monmouth have £34,000 of parochial tithes, and the rest of Wales £120,000, so that the smaller part, judged by population, has three and a half times its proper share of tithes. Take North and South Wales. They have had their quarrels before, and may have them again. Roughly speaking, the parochial tithes are the same—that is to say, that North Wales gets nearly £74,000 and South Wales £70,000; and, while the parochial tithes are nearly equal, the populations are as 451,000 to 1,325,000, so that, tested by population, North Wales has nearly three times the share of South Wales. This is a difference which is intolerable, and cannot be justified on any general principle. When you come to parishes this inequality is even greater than it appears to be when you are considering larger areas. It is greater for two reasons—because there is a great existing inequality in the distribution of the tithe as between various parishes, and also because that inequality is now partially redressed by the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but their action is to be put an end to by the Bill. The town of Swansea has a population of 43,000; the parochial tithe is £142 in all; and in order more or less to redress the balance the Ecclesiastical Commissioners give £649 a year to the five parishes of which Swansea is composed. This £649 will be swept away by the Bill, and Swansea will be left with its £142 per annum for carrying out all the objects of religion. That is the case of Swansea. Take the case of the parish of Llangelynin, in Carnarvonshire; its tithe is £250 a year and its population 158; so that 158 people in the village have a much larger sum than the 43,000 in Swansea. There, again, I take it that Llangelynin will like the arrangement, but what will Swansea say to the new arrangement? Here is another case that is even worse. There is a parish in Carmarthenshire where there are two livings in which the parochial tithe is nil, the tithe goes elsewhere, but the population is 23,900, or close upon 24,000. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners meet the necessities of this case by an allowance of £439, which goes under the Bill, so that 24,000 people will be left without a single sixpence. I could give other cases, but I do not think it is necessary, because I do not believe any Welsh Member will rise in his place and pretend that these inequalities do not exist, or that they are justifiable, or indeed tolerable. But, Sir, that is not my only objection, from the public point of view, to this scheme. What will the result be from another point of view—that produced by continuing payment to a church so long as the incumbent happens to live? You will have one parish coming almost immediately into possession of what it is entitled to under this Bill, and next door to it another parish which will have to wait for a long period. Do you think that will conduce to a cordial feeling between the parishioners and the clergymen? I do not know whether I am right in interpreting something which fell from an hon. Member just now into a threat of what would happen to a clergyman if he presumed to live too long, and kept the parishioners out of their just rights—that he was to be made uncomfortable and driven from the parish.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I did not make use of any threat at all. I simply said that the clergyman might be offered inducements to leave.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I will not chop logic with the hon. Member; but I may assume for the sake of argument that his Welsh countrymen may resist the inducements which may be offered. I ask the House to consider what will be the position of the parish reformer in these circumstances. Take the village Hampden, with a passion for baths and washhouses—he finds the village cursed with a young and healthy incumbent. Would not the whole influence of this interesting agitator be entirely directed to the purpose of driving out the unhappy individual who stands in the way of the village acquiring the property of the Church to carry out his favourite scheme? When I remember that almost the only argument the Home Secretary condescended to use in favour of his plan was that it was going to introduce peace into the Principality in lieu of discord, it appears to me to be one of the most wonderful projects ever advanced from the Treasury Bench. Whether I consider it from the point of view of the relations of large areas of the country, or of the counties to each other, or of parish to parish, or of individuals in each parish who are going to quarrel for these funds, or of the unfortunate incumbent who will have to bear with their impatience—from whatever point of view you consider the question, whatever class you take into consideration, you are driven to the conclusion that you are asked, with full deliberation, to throw an apple of discord into Welsh social life, that will make the condition of that country perfectly intolerable. I think there is a worse aspect of this particular method of dealing with this fund. Hitherto, when we have heard of disestablishment, it has been advocated on the ground that it was better the money should be thrown into the sea rather than used for a rival sect. I do not think that that is a very honourable argument, but it is an intelligible argument, and it does not appeal to all the baser passions of humanity. The Government, however, drag in as allies every one of those passions to which they can offer any temptation. Not content, as their predecessors have been, with ministering to the envy of competing sects, they must minister also to the greed and avarice of private individuals. You are going to teach every man in a Welsh parish where there are ecclesiastical tithes to be distributed that the organisation and the man who has been ministering to his spiritual needs now stand in the way of his putting so much hard cash into his pocket; and you are teaching him to watch with eagerness the gradual transfer of the property which has been hitherto devoted to spiritual purposes to the advancement of ends which may be good enough in themselves, and which certainly are in accordance with the passing fads of the moment, but which no one on either side of the House will dare to put on a level with the great objects which the Church serves. I cannot help wondering what would be the result of a cross-examination, could we conduct it under favourable conditions, in which the examiner would be some intelligent foreigner not acquainted with our ecclesiastical squabbles, and in which the defendants would be the Members of Her Majesty's Government. I should like them to be put on their oath as to the motives which have moved them to bring in this Bill. I can understand the intelligent foreigner, who has been told that this Church property dates back from immemorial antiquity, and has been used for spiritual purposes for hundreds of years, asking the Government why it is that the Church is to be deprived of this means of usefulness. He might say, "Have you ceased to be Christians—is it because Christianity is no longer the accepted religion of the country—that you wish to deprive a Christian Church of its endowments?" Whatever other reasons the Government might give, that is a reason which they would hasten to repudiate. Then the intelligent foreigner might ask, "Is it because the divergences of belief between the Anglican Church and the Nonconformist sects are so great that it is impossible for them, though all calling themselves Christians, to consent to work together for the same great object?" He would be told in answer that that was not the case. The greatest founders of Welsh Nonconformity were devoted members of the Anglican communion, in the very days when the hon. Member says that that communion was neglecting its duty; they lived and died members of that communion; and at this moment I understand that it is part of the charter of more than one of these great Nonconformist sects that they accept the articles of the Church of England. It is, therefore, no divergence of belief which makes these gentlemen rush for the funds of the Church to which they do not belong. "Is it, then," our foreign inquirer might ask, "because the Church of England has changed its religion and given up opinions which it once held?" He would be told that that is not so. By statute of this realm a Nonconformist Body which for 25 years professes a particular faith unchanged, may keep the property originally given to it for other purposes. The English Church has maintained for 300 years and more her doctrines unchanged. And why is she to be deprived, with this long record behind her, of the privilege which you give to a Nonconformist Body every 25 years if it desires to change its doctrines? Then the foreigner might ask, "If you are agreed that the Church in Wales preaches Christianity and a form of Christianity to which you have no objection, and has deserved to keep its endowments by consistent adhesion to its doctrines, is your object to deprive it of its endowments because experience shows that the cause of religion is not really furthered by the possession of material wealth?" ["Hear, hear!"] One hon. Gentleman appears to think that that is so. It is not the opinion of the great body of the Nonconformists of this country, who have gladly accepted, and have reckoned among their greatest benefactors, those who endowed them with the worldly goods without which even spiritual work cannot be done. Then the inquirer might ask, as a last resort, whether these funds were now useless for religious purposes because those purposes were adequately provided for from other sources; and whether these Nonconformist Bodies, of which he would have heard so much, really fulfilled all the spiritual functions necessary for the welfare and spiritual health of the Welsh population. He would be told in answer that that was not the case. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down said that in every glen in Wales the Nonconformists had erected their chapel. But have they found a pastor in every glen to minister to that chapel? He knows that they have not. In one diocese alone about half the parishes are without any permanent pastor, and that is because the funds to provide the permanent pastor are wanting. And these bodies, who avowedly cannot carry out their spiritual functions efficiently for the population with which they deal, are nevertheless so anxious to deprive a rival community of the means of carrying out its work that all higher considerations appear to be lost in that one overmastering desire. I am afraid that the result of this cross-examination, if carried out, would be that, unless we are to draw our highest wisdom from analyses of the Division Lists of this House, there would appear no adequate reason which could move this Government, or any Government, to deprive the Church of Wales of its hereditary wealth. The intelligent foreigner would discover that, while the Government may be animated by excellent motives, they are certainly animated by the desire for political support; and that those at whose bidding they act are not so much behaving in a spirit of missionaries anxious to propagate the same truths, as in the spirit of rival traders in a neutral market. The hon. Member who has just spoken hardly concealed his view. He regarded the Church endowments as bounties placed upon trade competitors, and he thought it decent and fitting to introduce into the spiritual sphere ideas which have no place outside the domain of the market and the quarrels of ordinary contending traders. What would be thought of learned Societies if they were not content with an honourable rivalry in extending the bounds of knowledge, but were to devote their whole energies to depriving rival bodies of any advantages which they might have from State support, not for the purpose of sharing that support, but to give it to some objects wholly unconnected with science? Whatever words they used, whether they cloaked their policy under the name of scientific liberty and freedom, it would be easily perceived that they were really animated by jealousy, and by nothing else but jealousy. It would be known that they were prepared to sacrifice the ends of knowledge and the objects of science in order that they might not be outstripped in the race of discovery by some rival body of learned men. Men of science would be for ever disgraced if they adopted such a policy. I cannot see that it is less disgraceful when it is adopted by Christians than when it is adopted by merely scientific men. There is no epithet which I should be prepared to apply to men of science in such circumstances which ought not to be transferred without any alteration or diminution to the body of Nonconformists of whom the hon. Member is the representative. I cannot say how this battle of disestablishment, of which the first guns were fired on Thursday night, will end. I dare not venture to prophesy, for I do not know. But this I will say—that this is one of those causes in which, if we are to be defeated, I would rather perish with the side that loses than triumph with the side which is victorious. I suppose we all attempt to gauge and estimate the forces which are silently at work moulding the future of society; and I cannot help feeling—though I may be wrong—that they are on our side. I believe now that the prospects of Church Establishment, even in the face of this Bill, are far brighter than they were a generation ago. I think a new spirit is springing up. The democracy, which is slowly moulding for good or for evil the Creed on which it will attempt to guide the destinies of this country, is not, as I think, in harmony with the kind of speech to which we have listened to-night, or with the ideas which lie behind those speeches. I believe that they hold, as I hold, that for the welfare of the community this standing witness to great spiritual forces in every parish in the country is a vital necessity; and that they will not allow the machinery by which these great objects are to be carried out to be impaired either to satisfy the greed of a too-economical ratepayer, or to satisfy the envy of rival Nonconformist sects.

*MR. REES DAVIES (Pembrokeshire) said, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had poured out the vials of his wrath and had censured his hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon because of his strictures on the Established Church in Wales. He confessed that the censure sounded very strange in his ears, coming as it did from one who, during a former Debate in that House, had accused the Welsh Members who were in favour of the disestablishment of the Church in Wales of being animated by envy and a desire for plunder. Last year when the Suspensory Bill was before the House the Government were taunted by the Party opposite with having brought in a half-hearted measure. They said that the Suspensory Bill would be a chain around the neck of the Church of England; that it would hamper the operations of the Church in Wales, and they demanded instead a fair and straight measure of disestablishment. The Government had accepted the challenge, and the Party opposite had obtained what they wanted. The Bill before the House was a broad and comprehensive measure; it had the heartiest support of the overwhelming majority of the people of Wales; and the Representatives of the people of Wales expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government for having brought it forward, because—though the Bill in some of its details was not so drastic as they desired—they recognised that it was a just attempt to settle a long-standing grievance in their country. He would not argue the more technical point as to whether the Church of England was the "Church in Wales" or "the Church of Wales." He would say that it was not the Church of the people of Wales; that, in fact, it was alien to the sympathies of the people of Wales, and, as his right hon. Friend the Secretary for Scotland had said in a former Debate—

> "Now that the political disabilities of the county householders have been removed the grievance of the great body of the Welsh people with respect to Church disestablishment is the most signal injustice which is still left unredressed."

Hon. Gentlemen opposite had challenged the Welsh Members to bring forward statistics in support of their case. His hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon had that night brought forward statistics which were absolutely unanswerable, and he should look with curiosity to the manner in which hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were the stalwart defenders of the Church on Church Defence platforms, would meet those statistics. But statistics were not necessary to prove the case for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales. They relied on the fact that 31 out of the 34 Members elected by Wales were pledged to disestablishment, and also on the words of the late Mr. Matthew Arnold, who had described Wales as "a nation of Nonconformists." He would remind hon. Gentlemen opposite, who asked that a Census should be taken on the question, of the grossly dishonest methods which were resorted to in order to obtain signatures to Petitions against the Suspensory Bill last Session. If he went fully into the matter he would probably be, on that occasion, out of Order; but he was in a position to prove that in his county the names of children 6 months and 18 months old were put to the Petitions against the Suspensory Bill; that in one case, at least, the signature of a lunatic was obtained, and that a large number of farm servants were induced to sign the Petitions by statements that the object of the Bill was to rob the clergy of their fees, and that it would mean the imposition of a heavy tax on farm servants. And he could further prove that the name of a woman who objected to sign had been literally forged to a Petition, and had been subsequently erased by the clergyman, at the instigation of a leading Nonconformist. Those were some of the methods adopted by the Church Party in Wales to obtain signatures against the Suspensory Bill; and if that was to be the system adopted to obtain the views of the Welsh people on disestablishment, the friends of disestablishment would have no part in it. He frankly made hon. Gentlemen opposite a present of one fact. He admitted that to a certain extent in urban districts there had been a slight increase in the numbers attending the Church in Wales. But would it be contended that because of a system of proselytism—in some cases possibly fair, and in other cases unfair—there had been a slight increase in the number of Church-goers in Wales, a real solid argument in favour of an Established Church in Wales existed? Wherever the English language was spoken in urban districts, the greater social attractions of the Established Church, which was attended by a greater number of rich people, had frequently the effect of increasing the numbers of that Church. But if they went to the rural villages of the country they would find that Nonconformity was overwhelming. In the county which he represented five out of every six in the rural districts—or even more—were Nonconformists and opponents of the Established Church. He knew of a church, the roof of which had fallen in 60 years ago, and had never, at any rate until a recent date, been repaired, and yet the people of the district in which it was situated had to pay tithe in support of the parson of that district. He could not conceive of a greater fraud than that, and yet such instances were very numerous throughout Wales. How could the people of Wales have any respect for an Establishment under which such things were possible? He invited hon. Gentlemen to witness these things for themselves rather than to rely upon the fallacious statements of Church Defence emissaries. As he had said before, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had censured the Welsh Members for their strong language in respect to the Church. But this was what the right hon. Gentleman himself said in the House in 1892—

> "I quite admit, and I fully and freely admit, that there are a very large number of gentlemen who are in favour of disestablishment upon abstract, general, and historical grounds; but I cannot admit, with the facts before me, that those who desire the disestablishment of the Welsh Church desire it upon abstract or historical grounds. They want disestablish-

ment, because they want disendowment. Disestablishment is on their lips; disestablishment is in their resolution, but what they want is disendowment. It is not reform they desire, but plunder. Envy—envy, not piety, is the motive of their action."

Envy of what? he would ask. Of an ancient and wealthy institution, tottering to its very foundation? And yet the right hon. Gentleman had the cool assurance to censure the Representatives of the people of Wales for their strong language. But the right hon. Gentleman was not singular in his invective. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight had said—

> "The funds which have been devoted to the Establishment will lighten the rates, and your object is to take in the poor man;"

and his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Epsom, echoing the Leader of the Opposition, had said that the Nonconformists were animated by "envy and jealousy." He could say that hon. Gentlemen opposite very much mistook the feelings of the people of Wales if they thought they cared only for the paltry pounds, shillings, and pence of the Establishment. The people of Wales sought to put an end to the Establishment from a sense of justice, and in order that there might be absolute religious equality in the Principality. The voluntary principle was the principle on which Nonconformity had succeeded in Wales. There were 4,000 Nonconformist chapels in Wales, and every year £400,000 were subscribed for their maintenance. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had talked about "honourable rivalry" between the two sections of the Christian Church in Wales. There was a rivalry between them; but it was not altogether an honourable rivalry. The Church of England in Wales still possessed—notwithstanding all the efforts of the Nonconformists—the great advantages which she had enjoyed for hundreds of years. For the past 100 years the Church of England had had all the advantages, yet the rivalry which had been referred to had deprived the Church of her influence, and had made of Wales a great Nonconformist community. He would not detain the House longer than to remind hon. Members that in America and in our Colonies no State Church existed, and absolute religious equality prevailed, and there were no feuds between the religious sects. There was a wide distinction between the Saxon and the Celtic races. The Saxon may cling to episcopalianism, but the Celt will not tolerate it. He and his friends knew that they were at the outset of a keen struggle, but they awaited the result with absolute complacency, knowing that they had the Welsh nation as well as the great body of the Liberal Party at their backs. Although hon. and right hon. Gentlemen might retard disestablishment, as the Tory Party had retarded great reforms for centuries, he assured them they could only delay for a time the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Welsh people for the establishment of absolute religious equality in their country.

*MR. JEBB (Cambridge University) said, he would not follow all the criticisms which had been made by hon. Members, but rather would address himself to certain broad aspects and large considerations which the Bill brought before them. Vital as the Bill was to the highest interests of Wales, far-reaching as must be its ulterior consequences, should it pass into law, to the Principality, it was not of less vital import, and its consequences would not be less extensive or less serious for England as a whole. Every Member of the House, and every member of the Church of England, was, therefore, entitled to take an interest in the discussion of this measure. The principle on which the introduction of the Bill was justified had been stated with the utmost frankness and clearness by the Home Secretary. It had been urged that the proportion of Welsh Members in favour of disestablishment was a sufficient justification for the Bill; but he would remark that Wales had not yet a separate Parliament, and it was the duty of every Member of the Imperial Assembly to consider this and every question from the point of view of what was best for the whole Kingdom. The figures 31 to 3 were not claimed as representing the proportionate number of electors in Wales who voted for or against disestablishment. So long as the Religious Census was refused, they lacked the primary and most essential document for the investigation of that aspect of the matter. No doubt the Church question played a prominent part in many elections in Wales; but did no other issue, such as Home Rule for Ireland, contribute to the results of recent elections? And, as to the Church issue itself, had there been no appeal to mere cupidity and jealousy? A local demand, not free from ambiguity, was made the ground for destroying a national institution. With regard to the nature of the national institution, he remarked that they had heard throughout these discussions much more about endowment than about establishment. The Church had been considered as a number of Ecclesiastical Corporations, sole or aggregate, severally holding properties. The establishment had in these Debates been regarded only under the aspect of privilege. When the Home Secretary introduced the Suspensory Bill last year, he spoke of the privileges appertaining to the status of the establishment—a phrase correct in itself, but corresponding with an inaccurate conception in the popular mind. The establishment of the Church had been spoken of as if, once upon a time, the State had singled out this denomination from other religious denominations, had set it up, and had attributed to it, by means of certain privileges, a higher spiritual rank than that which was accorded to other religious denominations. Everyone knew, however, that the State never did anything of the kind. The word "establish" did not only mean "to set up." It also meant "to settle," "to confirm in rights," "to ratify." In this sense it occurred in the Statute of Provisors, where Parliament was described as having "ordered and established" such or such a thing; in Acts of Uniformity of the 16th century, in reference to the Liturgy of the Church, and to the Book of Common Prayer; and in the Act of Union between England and Scotland, in reference to the Protestant religion in England and to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland respectively. The establishment had its origin in a time when the Church had as yet no spiritual competitor. The Church possessed great power, liable to be affected by foreign influence; and the State thought it prudent, as a matter of public policy, to take from the Church certain securities against possible excesses of uncontrolled ecclesiastical power. It was then enacted that the Ecclesiastical Law and Courts should become part of the public law of the realm. The nature of the alliance between Church and State was not so much the bestowal of privileges upon the Church as the imposition upon the Church by the State of certain limitations of power. They had heard a good deal about religious equality, but he would remind the House that there was something still more vital, and that was religious freedom. It might fairly be claimed for the Anglican Church, and would not be denied even by those most unfriendly to her so long as they were unbiased and unprejudiced, that throughout the centuries she had been the greatest bulwark against spiritual and religious tyranny, and had afforded the best guarantee for religious freedom. If they sought a contrast, need they look further than to some of the provisions of Mr. Gee's now celebrated scheme, or the spirit which had inspired a speech they had heard that afternoon? He would not attempt on the present occasion to go into the details of statistics, but would refer only to the general features of the case. The most important fact to be noted in connection with the Established Church in Wales was that she had latterly experienced a revival of activity. It was admitted, indeed, that there had been such a revival. On November 20, 1883, a conference on disestablishment was held at Carnarvon, at which a Dissenting minister read a paper, afterwards published by the Liberation Society, in which he fully and fairly admitted the fact of this revival, and of this growing energy and zeal in the Church. He then said—

> "I know that this revived activity of the Church is taken by some as an argument why we should let the Church alone, and allow her to go on doing good, but I take the argument to be just the reverse."

There could not be better confirmation of the remark of his hon. Friend (Sir R. Webster) on Thursday last, that the present moment had been chosen for the attack because it was seen that the Church was so rapidly gaining ground. In view of this testimony of the progressive activity of the Church, why should it be beyond hope that this growing activity of the Church should gradually win back some of those who were estranged from her, and that she might establish with the rest some tolerable *modus vivendi*?

That question had been raised by gentlemen on the other side, and in each case the answer was summed up in the words "Too late." "Too late" was a sorrowful answer, when the question was one of reconciliation between different Christian denominations; and he declined to accept those words as a final answer to such a question without, at all events, further examination. He would not adduce recondite facts, but merely such as could be learned from books accessible to all. What was the origin of Welsh Nonconformity? The right hon. Baronet (Sir G. O. Morgan) had remarked that the origin of Welsh Dissent might be summed up in the two words, "English Bishops"; but the right hon. Baronet knew that under the Tudors and the Stuarts, when 44 Welshmen in succession occupied Sees in Wales, the people of Wales were not disaffected towards the Church. The change dated from the time of the Revolution. It was the policy of sending to Wales as Bishops Englishmen, who were not only ignorant of the Welsh language, but had no sympathy with the Welsh people, which began to estrange the Welsh people from the Church. Another cause was the extreme poverty of the Church in Wales during the 18th century. A writer in *The Quarterly Review* for January, 1890, said that in the year 1720, in the diocese of St. Davids, there were no fewer than 233 livings of which the value was not more than £50, and, among these, 154 of which the value did not exceed £30. Along with those things came that torpor and apathy which unhappily was not peculiar to the Church in Wales, for during the 18th century it affected, more or less, the whole Church of England. It was in that state of things that the old Welsh Methodism began. That movement was begun by Welsh Churchmen, and it arose within the Church. It remained within the Church, and was always entirely friendly to the Church. Daniel Rowlands lived and died a Churchman; so did Griffith Jones, the father of Welsh national education, and the originator of the itinerant ministry; so did Howell Harris, the great lay preacher, who was buried near the altar in the church of Talgarth—by his own wish, because it was at the rails of that altar that he first experienced a sense of his own shortcomings. Meanwhile what was the position of Welsh Dissent? During the 18th century, Welsh Dissent, as distinguished from Church Methodism, was confined to small numbers of three denominations—Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians. At the beginning of the present century came (in 1811) the great separation of Nonconformists from the Church in Wales; but the separation was not associated on the part of the Nonconformists with any such attitude towards the Church as they unfortunately saw in some hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. Thomas Charles of Bala, who left the Church, retained, to his death in 1814, a strong affection for it. The phrase, "alien Church," is of recent coinage. When Mr. Watkin Williams introduced in that House in 1870 a Motion for disestablishment, he said—

> "The Church establishment in Wales is an ancient and a venerable institution. It is not, like the Church in Ireland, an alien Church, thrust upon the people by a conqueror and an oppressor. It is not, I think I am right in saying, regarded by the people with any feelings of hostility. Indeed, in many cases, it is regarded with feelings of veneration and affection."

When the right hon. Baronet the Member for East Denbighshire discussed the phrase "alien Church" the other evening, he did not confine himself to the historic sense of "alien," as meaning a Church of foreign origin, but also spoke of it as a Church which was fundamentally foreign to the character and temper of the Welsh people; it was too "cold" and "formal" for them; in other words, he used the word "alien" in the sense of uncongenial. Those words, he confessed, rang strangely in his ears. He wondered whether the right hon. Baronet had ever read how in the last century great congregations came together in Wales from the mouth of the Conway to the mouth of the Wye, to hear the leaders and founders of the old Welsh Methodism—clergymen of the Church of England using Church of England formularies? Did he also forget one great service with which this "alien" Church must be perpetually associated in the minds of Welshmen—the fact that the Welsh version of the Scriptures was brought out by William Morgan in 1588, under the auspices of the then Archbishop of Canterbury? And when one generation later (in 1620) a revised version of the Welsh Bible was produced, by whom was it brought out? By Parry, who had succeeded Morgan as Bishop of St. Asaph, and Dr. John Davies, Rector of Mallwyd, in Merionethshire. It had been said of this version of the Bible that it was "*the* book which had fixed the Welsh language," and was "practically the dictionary of the Welsh people." Thus that language of which Welshmen were so proud, when drooping and ready to perish, had been enshrined in its noblest monument by this very Church which hon. Members opposite were seeking to disestablish. Now, one word as to a topic touched on by the Leader of the Opposition. In the explanation the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary gave as to what was to be done with cathedrals, he said—

> "We have come to the conclusion that they ought to be preserved as national monuments."

He (Mr. Jebb) must confess that that phrase had astonished him. The cathedrals had never been used and never been intended for any other purpose than the worship of the Church of England. If the Church in Wales was not a national but an alien Church, how could the cathedrals be national monuments? Or if the meaning was that when transferred to the new triumvirate they would become "national," why then "monuments"? He hoped in his heart that no such hopeless irreconcilability between Nonconformists in Wales and Churchmen existed as was assumed by hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Church of England, like every other human institution, had had its shortcomings and failings, but at almost every period of its history it had known how to conciliate and attract; it had been an influence tending to soften the sharper conflict of interests, to mitigate causes of social strife, and to bring people of various classes and divergent opinions into relations of mutual goodwill, or at least of mutual forbearance. The tendency on the part of the older Nonconformist bodies of England was to come nearer to the Church, and he wished the same beneficial agency of conciliation and goodwill might also become operative in Wales. If he were a Welshman, there was nothing he should be more sorry to say or to hear said of his country than that it was the only part of the United Kingdom where the conduct of the people was inaccessible to an agency of conciliation, and where their ears were for ever sealed against a message of peace. Suppose this Bill became an Act, and the Church in Wales was disestablished, what would be the result to the poor in Wales? He had never uttered a syllable in disparagement of the Nonconformist ministration, but he believed it was admitted by many earnest Nonconformists that the parochial system of the Church in Wales had been enabled to do a work which it had not been in their own power to do. If the Bill were carried into law, the possibilities of that parochial ministration would be greatly circumscribed. Wales would also suffer in the matter of education—and it must be borne in mind that in the diocese of Llandaff alone there were 30,000 children in the church voluntary schools. And so far as the Church in England itself was concerned, what would be the effect of the passing of this Bill? Every diocese not already disestablished would exist at the mercy of local agitation. It would only be necessary to show or to allege that in Cornwall or Yorkshire a local majority existed against the Established Church, and the diocese concerned must go. The right hon. Baronet the Member for East Denbigh, in 1870, had said—

> "I do not like this long agony of piecemeal disestablishment. It is like putting a man to death by tearing him limb from limb."

Yes, it was like that—but with a difference. In ancient and in modern times men had been slowly hacked to pieces; but that was not after a mere condemnation of an arm or a leg; it was after some sort of trial held, and some sort of judgment passed, on the person as a whole. He asked that before the Bill passed into law the Government should take the collective sense of the country upon the fate of the Church as a whole.

Mr. H. ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said, he differed from the arguments as well as the facts of the hon. Member who had just sat down, but he appreciated the moderation with which he had spoken, for he had avoided attributing unworthy motives to those who felt so strongly in favour of the Bill. His (Mr. Roberts's) principal object in rising was to emphasise the strength of the sentiment in Wales in favour of this Bill. During the last Parliament the constituency he now represented was represented by a Unionist, who was returned by a majority of over 1,500 votes. At the last Election the majority disappeared, and in place of it 2,300 votes were registered in favour of the candidate of the Government. Now, how was that brought about? It had undoubtedly been brought about, to use a phrase of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, by the "magic" of disestablishment. The Leader of the Opposition had treated somewhat scornfully the argument that 31 out of 34 Welsh Members were pledged to support this Bill. They contended that that was the determining argument in this Debate. The issue which the House of Commons had to decide was a political issue; but if that argument was objected to, he would fall back upon the fact that last year not only a majority from Wales was disclosed in favour of this Bill, but a majority of 56 was obtained from the whole of the Kingdom. The right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol had attempted to minimise this argument, and had pointed out in the first place that no attempt had been made to bring this question prominently forward in the country. For the last 20 years the demand for disestablishment had been made in Parliament by Members from Wales, and with an increasing strength and unanimity. In the year 1870, before the Ballot Act was passed, only seven Members for Wales voted in favour of a Disestablishment Resolution; in the year 1889, 28 voted for the proposal, and only 5 against it; in 1891, 29 voted for it and 4 against it; and in 1893, 31 voted for it against 3, or 10 to 1. When they remembered that the Irish Church was disestablished, when the majority of Irish Members in favour of disestablishment was 69 to 33, they would at once see with how much greater urgency Welsh Members could press their claim. In 1885 the voters in Wales who voted for disestablishment numbered 31,000; in 1892 that number was increased to 58,000, including Monmouthshire. Not only had the matter been brought forward in Parliament, but it had been brought forward at every General Election in the country. In 1890-91 a Campaign Committee was formed in Wales, and through the agency of that Committee, £5,000 having been raised from the people for the purpose, the subject was properly ventilated on almost every political platform throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was the second question on what was called the Newcastle Programme, and the time was ripe for dealing with it, and for definite action. By some it was said that disestablishment was not the most prominent question before the Welsh electors at the last General Election, and that the chief subject upon which they voted was "Home Rule." They had an authority upon this point of no less importance than Lord Salisbury himself, who, writing in the Autumn of last year to one of the *Reviews*, said that the Parliamentary majority in favour of Liberalism was, undoubtedly, achieved owing to the aversion of the Welsh people to the Established Church. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks-Beach), who spoke in opposition in the present Debate, said the Welsh were animated in this demand to a large extent by a spirit of robbery and sacrilege.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I did not say that.

Mr. H. ROBERTS said, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman had used the words "robbery and sacrilege." Well, there were two sides to this question. They did not, as representing Nonconformists in Wales, stand there that day as aggressors, but as the aggrieved. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] They did not make this demand with a wish to rob or commit sacrilege. They were there simply to demand justice and equality, and adequate reparation of what in his opinion had been during the last half-century a very grievous injustice done to them by the Establishment in Wales. The hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells cited the case of Brymbo as an instance of the Church's activity and progress. He (Mr. Roberts) would put before the House another case known to him personally in his own constituency. One day last week considerable excitement took place in the town of Denbigh because the goods of a farmer in a neighbouring parish had been distrained upon for tithes amounting to £5 8s., and were sold by public auction. The parish was 12 square miles in extent, with a tithe rent-charge of £650, and the farmer farmed

140 acres in that parish. There was only one Church, with services only on Sundays, and nine Nonconformist chapels, with services on Sundays and week-days. Four thousand five hundred pounds had been raised by voluntary subscriptions to build these chapels, and the people contributed a large amount annually towards keeping up the work of the ministry. Last Sunday week a census was taken in the parish of the worshippers at the church and the chapels. At the church there were 88 persons present during the services, and at the chapels 1,189. Was it strange that in a parish of that description, with the conditions of church and chapels such as he had described, that a farmer who lived four miles away from the church, who had never seen the face of his rector upon his farm, should refuse to pay £5 8s. tithe rent-charge, and was it not somewhat degrading to a church to collect that money, which ought to be a free-will offering from a parishioner, at the point of the bayonet and through the humiliating process of the County Court? If they desired to have a perfectly impartial view of the present position of the Church and of Church work in Wales they ought to go outside the boundaries of the Principality, and ask those who were not personally interested in the Church and in the present controversy. He would only quote the evidence on this point of the Bishop of Norwich, who, speaking on Welsh Disestablishment in Liverpool in 1892, when, as the Rev. J. Sheepshanks, he was the Rector of St. Margaret's, Aufield, said—

> "And it appears to me that if we take a calm and impartial view of this matter, there are important considerations which may be put forward on either side of the question. In the first place, it is undoubted that a very decided majority of the Welsh not only are not members of the Established Church but are eagerly desirous for disestablishment and disendowment. And, moreover, it is stated that the small minority of the Church people in the Principality consists largely of English residents and visitors and the well-to-do classes; whereas the masses of the Welsh people are strenuously Nonconformists. Upon this I could simply express my own opinion that if in any self-governing country the Established Church is in a decided minority, and if the large majority of the people are unitedly hostile to its continuance as an Establishment, in that case its maintenance as an Establishment, even if practicable, would be to the detriment of religion, and therefore to the true interests of the Church. And this leads us to ask the question, the very suggestion of which will doubtless anger the heated partizan, whether it is not at least possible that the disestablishment of the Church in Wales might not be for the advantage of the Church herself."

Among the Welsh population in America to-day there were from 450 to 500 Welsh Nonconformist churches, but not a single Welsh Established Church. How did the matter stand in Liverpool? There was there a very large Welsh population, and there were 30 Welsh chapels, and only two Welsh churches; and in 1892 a census was taken of those present at those churches and chapels on a Sunday evening, and it was found that 4,832 were worshipping in the Nonconformist chapels, and only 165 in the two Welsh churches. The Leader of the Opposition, speaking in Manchester last winter, said the measure of disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church which the Government intended to introduce into Parliament was deliberately intended to destroy a living branch of the Church. From the very outset of this controversy they had always made it a point in regard to every speech delivered and every pamphlet written to show that they had no animosity whatever against the Church as a religious institution. From their hearts they wished the Church success in the future. There was plenty of work in Wales both for the Church and for Nonconformity. Therefore, he wanted it to be made clear that they did not object to the Church as a Religious Institution, but as a Religious Establishment. Upon the merits of the Bill he had only, as a humble Member from Wales, to express his entire satisfaction with the measure in its main provisions, and to say that it would be received by the people of Wales in the spirit in which it had been conceived. Its introduction was one of the most important events in the history of Wales. He ventured to think that the Government having once taken this step could not recede from it, and that the time was not far distant when they would see it carried into law to the great good of the country which they represented. Further, he wished to express his personal gratification that the Bill had been introduced in a form which showed that the Government intended to deal with this old grievance of Wales in a comprehensive and statesmanlike way. Their action in this matter should earn for them the lasting gratitude of all those who had at heart the true welfare of Wales.

*Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Herts., St. Albans) said, the hon. Gentleman opposite had sought to show that the promoters of this Bill ought not to be looked upon as aggressors of the Church. So long, however, as the Party to which he belonged sought to take away the property of the Church and apply it to their own benefit, so long must they be content to be looked upon as aggressors. He had no objection to the tone of the hon. Member's speech, but when he drew conclusions from the number of those who attended Welsh Church services and Dissenting chapels in Liverpool, surely he must forget that that argument was disposed of last year by the hon. Member for Plymouth, when he pointed out that the English-speaking Welsh people naturally attended the English churches in Liverpool. No argument of any kind could be drawn from the point which the hon. Member had mentioned. The hon. Member for West Denbigh had told them that he wished well to the Church of England. Who were they to suppose was the guiding spirit in this matter—the Member for West Denbigh or the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs? The latter hon. Member, in the course of his speech, had misrepresented the position of the Church of England in Wales in every possible way. An hon. Member who spoke later in the Debate—the hon. Member for Pembrokeshire—asked how they were going to reply to the unimpeachable argument of the Member for Carnarvon. When argument resolved itself into calling documents official which proved to be taken from *The Contemporary Review*, and speaking of an imaginary Act of Union between the two countries of which nobody else had heard, he thought that argument of that sort answered itself, and might be taken as a fair gauge of the accuracy of the rest of the hon. Member's remarks. There was another point to which he would like to refer. The hon. Baronet the Member for one of the divisions of Denbighshire told them that they ought to accept this Bill lest they should get something worse. That argument had been advanced by freebooters and blackmailers ever since the world began, and to such an argument any man with spirit would make but one reply. Whenever this spirit of plunder was abroad the Church was always the first and easiest prey, and he would remind those who, though not feeling strongly on Church questions, had some respect for the rights of property, that when the attack began it would not stop with the Church. It would go on to other kinds of property. They had only to look at Ireland to be satisfied of that fact. What was the reason for taking away this property from the Church? It was not that she was misusing it. The Home Secretary himself had paid tribute to the self-sacrifice and devotion of its ministers. The only reason that could be alleged for taking away this property was that other people wanted it. What was the charge against the Church as a whole? That it was the Church, in the words of the Home Secretary, of a comparatively small minority, and consequently that she was a foreign or an alien body? As to the first charge, the Government refused to put the question to the test. They desired to have the Church's property, but they shrank from producing their title to the property. They knew very well that behind this charge, that it was the Church of a small minority, there lurked the fear that if her progress was not stopped she would become the Church of the majority. What was the difference between the supporters and the aggressors of the Church in this matter? The promoters of this Bill made allegations that they did not prove, or if they did substantiate them their facts belonged to a period so long past that they had really ceased to have weight. They who defended the Church said that if it was the Church of the minority in Wales it was the Church of a large minority, a minority increasing, according to the admissions of hon. Member opposite, in membership, in activity, and in zeal. They established that fact by a list of communicants, the number of baptisms, the number of new churches built, and the children attending the schools. When they said that there were some dissenting sects in Wales who were decreasing in number they based their statements upon what they read in the Welsh papers—*The Baner* and other papers—which admittedly represented the views of the Welsh Nonconformists, and which very sensibly and properly were constantly urging them to greater activity, and telling them that the Church was gaining in the race, and that they ought to keep pace with her advancement. Besides the charge against the Church as a whole, there was the charge against the clergy of the Church that they used their influence politically against those who were attacking the Church of England in Wales. How unreasonable would it be that they should do anything else? The Dissenting ministers were active in supporting those who were attacking the Church, and it was natural that the clergy of the Church of England should take the best course they could to defend it. He should like to say a few words about the cathedrals which he understood, under this Bill, were to be permitted to be still used for the religious services of the Church of England. They knew pretty well how much money in recent years had been spent upon the restoration of these edifices. How much did anyone suppose had been subscribed by Dissenters? Not much, he was sure. But how much had been given by Church people, and how much would have been given by Church people if they had had any idea that these cathedrals would be taken away from the objects to which they were now applied and used for purposes not only at variance with, but repugnant to, the feelings of the benefactors who had spent money in their maintenance and restoration, and worshipped within them? With regard to the case of the curates, the Home Secretary said cavalierly that the curates had no vested interest, and that therefore there was no reason whatever for giving them compensation. He would like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that the curate was not the servant of the rector, but of the cure, and that he could not be removed, except for misconduct, and by the order of the Bishop on the complaint of the rector. He agreed that the curate had not so substantial an interest as the rector, but he did not think he could be looked upon as having no more interest than a private servant who could be sent away at a month's notice and nothing more to be said. Hon. Members might think that because a man was rich they were justified in robbing him, but that, at all events, did not apply to the Welsh curate. If there was any body of men who should be treated with generosity it was the Welsh curates. With regard to the owners of advowsons, his opinion was that in offering them a year's purchase the Government was either doing too much or too little. Either the owners of advowsons must be regarded as having no vested interest at all or, if they had one, it must undoubtedly be worth more than a year's purchase. The arrangement as it stood was inconsistent and unreasonable. Whatever else this Bill might be, he hoped it would be understood that it was a direct attack upon the cause of religion. [*A cry of* "No!"] An hon. Member expressed dissent. He would show him why he said so: it was because money left for religious uses was to be diverted and applied to secular uses. [*A cry of* "Not necessarily!"] At all events, a portion of it was to be so applied. He would ask hon. Members whether technical education was a religious use. Of course not, but that was one of the objects put forward as showing the great benefits that this Bill would confer. What had happened to make this Bill more desirable now than in the past? Outside the House everything had gone in the contrary direction. The Church in Wales was doing its work well and increasing its members. Whatever the proportionate increase amongst Nonconformists might be, admittedly her activity was so great, that that very fact promoted the hostility of certain persons against her. That being so, he asked again what had happened to cause this Bill to be introduced? He could not describe the reason better than by quoting a threat which the hon. Baronet the Member for East Denbigh held out to the Government some time ago, when he said there was a compact body in the House counting 56 votes on a Division. That was the influence to which they owed this Bill—not to any consideration of justice nor to the failure of the Church to do its duty, but because there were gentlemen in that House who acted solidly together, and who represented 56 votes on a Division. What was that but the most shameless bribery on the part of the Government? But they could set against hon. Members opposite the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had all his life through, strongly and most powerfully (and as everybody on that side of the House would admit with a peculiar knowledge of this question) flouted and denied the arguments they had heard advanced by gentlemen opposite—and this, not in his salad days when he was green in judgment, but as late as 1891; and so far as they knew these were his sentiments to-day. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University that any Englishman, even if he had never set foot in Wales, had a right to be heard on this subject, and that if he was a member (as he was) of the Church of England, and saw a proposal to destroy, as he believed, and rob of her moneys the western portion of that ancient Church in Wales, he was entitled to put forward his protest. As Lord Grey said—

> "A man must have more than the simplicity of a child who could be made to believe that so great a blow could be successfully inflicted upon one part of the National Church Establishment without being speedily followed by other attacks of the same kind, and probably in the end by its overthrow."

Of course they knew that if this Bill passed, though he was confident it would not pass, it would be the beginning of the end. Naturally, they were being attacked in the weakest place. The principle once conceded, everybody knew that it would be only a question of time before the whole of the Establishment was destroyed, and its income taken away and diverted to other purposes. It had been said that this Bill bore a strong resemblance to Mr. Gee's scheme, and the Home Secretary's reply was that he had never seen that scheme. That, no doubt, was literally true, but only literally, for it was obvious that the Home Secretary had seen somebody who had seen the scheme who had conveyed it to him, and in order to prove that, he should read a few lines from Mr. Gee's scheme, and he would defy anybody to say that they did not appear to be quoted from the speech of the Home Secretary. Mr. Gee said—

> "The duty of carrying out the administrative work of disendowment in Wales (which should be considered as including Monmouthshire) should be entrusted to three Commissioners appointed by the Crown.
>
> "The principles according to which compensation was given to the clergy, &c., under the Irish Church Act, 1869, should not, on any account whatever, be adopted in this Act. A pension, as explained in the next paragraph, would be a fair and equitable settlement of the question, and satisfy all parties.
>
> "The tithes should be collected by officers appointed by the County Council. Each Parish Council or Vestry should receive its share of the surplus according to the amount of its tithe, from the tithe fund annually, which should be applied as follows: To enable parishioners to erect rooms for parochial purposes, and for libraries; also, as loans to assist farmers, labourers, and mechanics to erect cottages upon freehold allotments.
>
> "All churchyards, and other public burial grounds, should be transferred, and should be under the exclusive control of the Parish Councils."

He admitted there were certain alterations which decency demanded, but in two particulars it was even less generous than the scheme of Mr. Gee. The latter proposed that curates who were in the actual service of incumbents at the passing of the Act should also receive a pension, and it was only when cathedrals were unused and allowed to go out of repair that they were to be handed over to the County Councils. What was this national feeling which they were told had prompted this movement against the Church? Was it not a feeling of rapacity exacerbated by envy? That, he believed, was the feeling which was at the bottom of this movement, and so long as it could not be shown that this Bill was required, either in the interests of national justice or in the interests of the people, so long should he oppose it.

MR. EGERTON ALLEN (Pembroke, &c.) said, he desired to say a few words in regard to the Act which the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs had called the Act of Union, and the first words of the preamble of which had been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. It seemed to him unjust that the references which had been made to the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs should go unnoticed. To Welshmen this Act was perfectly well known, and the astonishment which the quotation of it caused to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition merely arose from the fact that he, not being a Welsh Member, did not regard it as any kind of importance to him how the political truth of the Welsh had come about so far as it connected them with the English nation. Of course the right hon. Gentleman knew, and everybody knew, that the Tudor Sovereign Henry VIII. was well affected to the Welsh Dominion, and it was in order to give that Welsh Dominion a share in the British Administration that this Act was passed. It began, no doubt, as quoted by the right hon. Gentleman; but, unfortunately for the understanding of the Act by the House, he confined his quotation to the first half-dozen lines of the preamble. The last half-dozen lines of the preamble showed conclusively that this really was, and was naturally thought to be by the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs, an Act of Union. The latter part of the preamble stated that

> "The said country or Dominion of Wales should stand and continue for ever from henceforth incorporated, united, and annexed to and with the realm of England,"

the people enjoying the same rights and privileges as were enjoyed by the English people. It was quite clear that Wales and England were looked upon up to that time as under different Administrations and different laws, and they were by this Act incorporated and united together into one United Kingdom. There could not be any better definition of this Act than that it was an Act of Union, and the Act itself was indexed as "Wales, Incorporation of, with England." The Act gave the first Members to Wales to represent that country in the British House of Commons. That being so, he asked whether the charge of ignorance ought to be levelled at the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs, who had quoted this Act as an Act of Union, or whether it ought not rather to be levelled at his critic?

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said, he did not flatter himself that he could add anything new to this great controversy, but still there were times at which people should speak out and use plain and direct language.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Sir R. TEMPLE went on to say that a large number of his constituents looked upon this Bill with dread and detestation and contemplated it with feelings akin to horror. He felt bound to give voice and expression to these feelings. The Welsh supporters of the Bill were never tired of reiterating that this Bill ought to pass because it was approved by the large majority of the Welsh Members. Englishmen would never admit that argument in a matter in which the whole of England as well as Wales was concerned. If it were admitted the whole country would be divided up into petty interests, and the Heptarchy would be restored. Though the Welsh Members pressed this argument unremittingly because it suited their policy at the time, they would never admit it for a moment in reference to England. This Bill was intended to destroy one of the outworks of the Church of England in its totality, and, therefore, the Church of England itself might be in some degree in danger. If the English Members had alone to decide the English question, everybody knew that there would not be the slightest danger to the Church of England in this generation, or probably for many generations to come. Whence, then, did the probability of danger arise? It arose from the fact that Irish and Scotch votes might be brought in to counterbalance the English majority. In a matter where England was concerned the decided majority of the English Members would not be allowed to prevail. Under these circumstances, why should a majority of Welsh votes be allowed to prevail in a Welsh matter? Let it once for all be understood that the Welsh Members' argument would never be admitted by those who sat on the Opposition side of the House. Inasmuch as disendowment was added to disestablishment, it was as well to look at the moral aspect of the question. The hon. Member for Carnarvon (Mr. Lloyd-George) seemed to imply that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) accused ministers of blunder and sacrilege in connection with this Bill. He (Sir R. Temple) was not sure that his right hon. Friend (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) in a great debating speech with which he had delighted the House had used those words, but there was no reason why a private Member should not speak unreservedly in the matter, and whether his right hon. Friend used the words or not he (Sir R. Temple) meant to use them, and he was sure that Members who sat near him would use them also. He said that the Bill was actually plunder, and that it was virtually sacrilege. Plunder meant taking away forcibly from a person or a Corporation that which belonged to him or it. The Church as a Corporation was as much able to hold property as any individual, and he contended that the tithes were indisputably, unquestionably, undeniably her property. This Bill proposed to take that property away. Of course it was not to be done by brute force or violence; but, nevertheless, as there was such a thing as judicial murder, there was such a thing as plunder by legislation, and that was what this Bill involved. In the next place, he said the Bill amounted to sacrilege. Sacrilege was the taking away violently of property of a sacred character which was intended for sacred purposes. This property belonged to the Church, and it was being alienated from sacred purposes. It was to be abstracted from sacred purposes in order to be used for secular purposes. How was the House to differentiate this process from that of taking as a thief took property from the inside of a church? This peculiar form of sacrilege seemed to him to be made peculiarly clear in the case of cathedrals. As the fabrics of the parish churches were to be left to the Church, why were the cathedrals to be taken away? Were they not built by exactly the same authority and from the same sources as the parish churches? In what sense were they "national monuments?" They were of course in a sense sacred monuments, and they were national as the Church was national. The peculiar injustice that was to be done was made clearer by the fact that the cathedrals had been maintained and restored by the money of Churchmen in modern times. What were the secular objects to which the Church property was to be misappropriated? The Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith), in his lucid and emphatic manner, had described the way in which Church property in Ireland had been squandered and wasted, but, at all events, it had been used for large, charitable, and beneficent purposes—sometimes for the relief of famine, sometimes for improving national education, sometimes for increasing the emoluments of the national school teachers, and sometimes for a great object like the relief of congested districts. The only possible instance of misuse was the proposed application of the small residue of the fund to the reinstatement of evicted tenants, but even that was a far larger object than the petty purposes mentioned by the Home Secretary in regard to the Welsh Bill. In Wales the tithes, amounting to some £250,000 per annum, were to be devoted to the parochial work of the Parish Council. If there was ever a temptation to waste a fund it was afforded by this Bill. There might have been something to be said for giving the money to voluntary schools, where at all events religions was taught, but the Parish Councils had nothing to do with education. It actually came to this: that money which had been devoted for many ages to the service of religion, to the preaching of the word of God, to the celebration of the Communion, to the ministrations of the Church, and to the parochial charities of all kinds, was to be used for such purposes as parish rooms, and he supposed public gardens or any like purpose which the Parish Council might be pleased to favour. Ho did not wish to disparage these parochial purposes, but he asked the House to consider their character in comparison with the sacred character of the services to which this money had been for so many centuries devoted. It could not be forgotten that the parish purposes to which tithes were to be applied were the very purposes for which rates were to be levied, and that there was absolute justification for what had been said by one of the leading organs—namely, that this Bill was nothing more or less than a gigantic bribe to the ratepayers of Wales. Could any Welsh Member say that any good could be done to religion by taking these great resources away from religion, and giving them to secular purposes? Much had been said about the Bill having the overwhelming majority of the Welsh people at its back. No doubt it had the great majority of the Welsh Members at its back, but the Opposition apprehended that that majority had largely been returned by political agencies. If it was said that the majority of the Welsh people were at the back of the Bill the House had a right to look at the electoral statistics and consider how many votes at the one or two last General Elections had been cast on the one side and on the other. When those statistics were examined it would be found that there was not an overwhelming mass of the Welsh people at the back of the Bill. He believed the majority was a slender one. If the present political agitation were brought to an end the Opposition believed that there would be no majority at all in favour of disestablishment. Then as regarded the Census. He was amazed when he heard the hon. Gentleman the Member for Pembrokeshire speak of that. The Welsh Members might be assured that to the end of this controversy the Opposition would taunt them with their hesitation and unwillingness to go to the test of a Religious Census. The Opposition, though they entertained the most charitable and friendly feelings towards their Welsh fellow-countrymen, could not but believe that there was some reason in the background for refusing this plain and clear test of the Census. What reason had the hon. Member given for refusing the test? Why, that the Welsh people would be dragooned or coerced into saying that they were members of the Church of England when they were not so in their hearts. He (Sir R. Temple) did not think he had exaggerated the hon. Member's main contention. He could not imagine how any Welshman in the House could dare to say that of his countrymen. The Welsh must be very unlike Englishmen or Scotchmen or any other inhabitants of Britain if at the latter end of the 19th century they could be treated in such a way as that. He (Sir R. Temple) refused to believe this cruel imputation on his Welsh fellow-countrymen. He declared that no Churchman would descend to such proceedings, and if they were attempted no Welshman would ever submit to it. The thing would be the utter fiasco it would deserve to be. A Religious Census was really refused by Welshmen opposite, because they believed it would be dangerous to their case. It was not denied that Nonconformity was predominant in some country places in Wales, but was that an argument for disestablishing the Church in Wales at large? Wales, picturesque as it was and interesting as it was in its physical characteristics and industrial developments, was not altogether made up of rural districts. It had industrial centres and an urban population. All sections of the people must be taken together. It did not follow that because Nonconformity might be predominant in isolated localities that, therefore, for these localities altogether the Church in Wales was to be disestablished and disendowed. As to the injustice of paying tithe to which the hon. Member for Carnarvon had referred, it should be borne in mind that the Welsh farmer would not be let off the payment by the Bill. If he disliked paying tithe to the Vicar, it would be equally distasteful to him to pay it to the County Council. The necessity for the payment was the real *crux* of the grievance, therefore the hon. Member's argument came to nothing. Then, more than one Member from Wales had denied that there was any jealousy at the bottom of the Bill. Well, he (Sir R. Temple) would like to ask, if the motive was not jealousy, what could it be?

An hon. MEMBER: Justice.

SIR R. TEMPLE said, that jealousy was not necessarily an ignoble motive. It sometimes pervaded the noblest of minds. If the Welsh Nonconformists would gain anything by the transfer of the tithes from the Church to the County Council, one would be able to understand their attitude. If it was to go to their own organisations he could understand it. But that was not so. Nonconformity in Wales certainly had nothing whatever to gain materially by this attack on the Church; what it had to gain morally he did not know. What motive, then, remained? He refused to admit, from friendliness to the Welsh people, that greed was at the bottom of their desire for the property of the Church, for he considered the Welsh people above that, although it might be said that there was an appeal to the cupidity of the ratepayers. He could not believe, however, that that was the true motive underlying the policy of Disestablishment. Neither was the motive one arising from a sense of injustice. If something was given to the Church by Parliament to which the Nonconformists had a fair claim and an equal title he could then understand a case of injustice; but that was not the case in the matter of tithes. Tithes were not given to the Church by Parliament. They were antecedent to Parliament itself, and coeval with property in this country. There was really a motive of jealousy; but he would not admit that that was wholly responsible for the introduction of such a dangerous and revolutionary measure as this. The hon. Member for Carnarvonshire had spoken of a political issue, and there, at last, was the true motive revealed. He would take care to point that out to his constituents, and he hoped the statement would be quoted, and requoted, and treasured up in the minds of Englishmen. This Bill could never be withdrawn. It might be defeated, it might be "knocked out," it might go for a referendum to the people, but it could not be withdrawn from the House of Commons. He promised the Government that it would receive unrelenting opposition from Members on his side of the House. They firmly believed that the Bill would be defeated, and that it had no chance of passing, but although it was merely held out as a thundercloud, as a war menace and a deadly threat to the Church of England, they trusted that Welshmen would not suffer themselves to be misguided. They had confidence in their Welsh fellow-countrymen. They held a high opinion of the Welsh Nonconformists, who were essentially religious men, and he was sure they did not wish, in their hearts, to strike this grievous blow at religion and so sacred a cause. They held that the Welsh Church was not an alien Church, but was a tender branch of the English Church, and they were confident that if she be left alone to work her way and minister among the Welsh people she would sooner or later re-establish herself in the position which she held in the days of old.

***Major EVAN R. JONES** (Carmarthen, &c.) said, he must invite the attention of the House to the fact that not a single Representative from Wales on the Opposition Benches had said one word in opposition to the proposals of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) had issued a solemn warning that after the next General Election a good many of those who were sitting on the Ministerial side would stay at home. He (Major Jones) ventured to give prophecy that any Representative from Wales who opposed the Bill would have the satisfaction of staying at home after the next General Election. They had contented themselves with handing over their case to the right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks-Beach), the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir R. Webster), and others, who had no knowledge whatever of the lives, the aspirations, and the aims of the Welsh people, else they would never have made the accusations they had made during the Debate. Much had been said as to the motives which animated the Welsh people in the present movement. They were told that money was at the bottom of it all. Apart from the fact that money involved a great principle, it had nothing to do with this case, and he ventured to say that tens of thousands of his fellow-countrymen regretted that money and property had anything to do with the question. They were asking for no experiment. The question of the disestablishment of the Church had been tried out for them, as many another problem had been tried out, in the United States. We had given charters to the American Colonies, and had insisted upon giving them also an Established Church, but when independence came and the Constitution of the United States was framed, an amendment was made by the wise statesmen of that time, and passed, and he would venture to read a passage on the subject from an authority which he thought would be received with respect. Judge Story had made use of these words—

> "The real object of the amendment was, not to countenance, much less to advance Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment, which should give to a hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the National Government. It thus cut off the means of religious persecution (the vice and pest of former ages), and of the subversion of the rights of conscience in matters of religion, which had been trampled upon almost from the days of the Apostles to the present age. The history of the parent country had afforded the most solemn warnings and melancholy instructions on this head; and even New England, the land of the persecuted Puritans, as well as other Colonies, where the Church of England had maintained its superiority, would furnish out a chapter as full of the darkest bigotry and intolerance as any which could be found to disgrace the pages of foreign annals. Apostacy, heresy and nonconformity had been standard crimes for public appeals, to kindle the flames of persecution, and apologise for the most atrocious triumphs over innocence and virtue."

By passing that amendment all religions were made free and equal before the law. The voluntary system had been on trial in that country for about 100 years, with the result that when the last Census were taken 62,000,000 of people were found to be living in the United States, and out of that total, accommodation was furnished for religious worship under the voluntary system for no less than 43,000,000 people, a proportion of something like 68 per cent. Mr. Horace Mann, in his Report of the religious statistics of this country, gave 58 per cent. as the real requirement of the community. Now, with regard to Wales, the Welsh Representatives made no war upon the episcopal form of worship, they only objected to its connection with the State. They maintained that the State Church, through a political agency working at its head, had been used for the purpose of annihilating the nationality of the Welsh people. ["No!"] He knew that was an unpalatable gospel to preach, but he ventured to say that if they had been 10,000,000 instead of 2,000,000 people the justice of their contention would have been recognised long since. At all events, there was the fact established that the voluntary system had provided religious accommodation for 65 per cent. of the entire population of Wales, against 25 per cent. supplied by the Church of England in the Principality. A claim had been set up by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir R. Webster) that if all the Nonconformists were ranged on one side and members of the Church on the other, the number would be about evenly balanced. This was the most sublime instance of human credulity he had ever heard of. The communicants of the Church of England in Wales to-day, according to the official Year Book of the Church, amounted to 6 per cent. of the population, whereas taking the four leading denominations of Nonconformity—namely, the Calvinistic Methodists, the Independents, the Baptists, and the Wesleyans, the number of their communicants reached 21 per cent. of the population; simply these four denominations, exclusive of Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Quakers, and other minor denominations. More than that, the numbers of the Calvinistic Methodist Body were more numerous than those of the Church of England in Wales. ["No!"] The Independents were stronger, and it was a very close thing indeed between the Baptists and the Church, so that the Church, giving it even the best position it could claim, would be only third in strength of all the denominations in the Principality. The numerical argument then could not hold good against the claim for religious equality. But he did not rest the case on statistics and the counting of heads. He contended for the great principle of religious equality, and it was nonsense to talk of religious liberty while there was a privileged Church, a privileged class, and a privileged Chamber in the Legislature. He declared his opinion, and without any ill-will towards the Church, that historically the Church had been in Wales an engine for crushing the spirit, stifling the language, and breaking the hearts of the Welsh people. The Welsh had been denied a place among the nations. But they planted Britain; and their history was old before English history began. Such sneers at an ancient nationality was not the way to treat the founder of the firm, having regard to the coming federated Empire. For himself he thanked the Government for bringing in this measure of justice so long sought for—a measure which did not give all that the Welsh people wanted, but which would put an end to the partisanship of a great Religious Body, and sever the Church for ever from the political institutions of the country.

*MR. GATHORNE HARDY (Sussex, East Grinstead) said, he was especially anxious upon this occasion to protest, though it might be for the last time, against legislation which he believed to be equally injurious to the State and to the Church. He was desirous to protest against it on this occasion rather than on the Second Reading for two reasons. In the first place, he considered that when one's objection went to the root of the Bill, when one believed that no Bill brought forward for the purpose of disestablishment and disendowment, whatever might be its details, could be other than a mischievous Bill, one was right in coming forward to oppose it on such an occasion as that. Whether it should be opposed by vote as well as by voice depended partly on considerations of strategy into which he need not enter; but if anybody did go into the Lobby against the introduction of this Bill he (Mr. Gathorne Hardy) would not be far behind. The second reason why he was desirous of speaking on this stage of the Bill was that, in common with almost every Member, he did not believe that they would have the privilege of seeing the Bill before them again for the Second Reading. They were being treated to a series of dissolving views of the Newcastle Programme. Those views were being displayed with all the illumination which the enthusiasm of Members on the Liberal side could give them, and they would then in the great majority of cases be dusted and put away in an old cupboard, possibly never to re-appear in the same form, or possibly to be touched up in accordance with the wishes of one or the other sections. Anybody who knew the position with regard to the business and the time of the House must know that, whatever might be the pressure of the Welsh Members, it was impossible that the Bill could go further than the present stage during this Session. Now, he did not intend himself to introduce any element of bitterness into that discussion. He endeavoured to appreciate the motives of other Members of the House, however much they might differ from him, and however different might be their desire with regard to legislation. But he opposed this Bill because he believed that it was a measure not merely for the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, but because he believed that it was a measure aimed at the Establishment in England as well as in Wales. He believed that the great majority of its supporters in the House were really only supporting it because they believed that the Welsh branch was the weakest branch of the Church of England, and when they had cut away one portion of what was, after all, a great united Church they would find it easier to go further still. He might be told that he was using a two-edged argument; that he was doing an unwise thing in binding up the existence of the Church of England with the existence of the Church in Wales. He had heard that argument over and over again before, but they did no good by hiding the issues from themselves, by putting their heads into the sand like the ostrich, and trying to conceal from themselves what was the real drift of measures like this. They would not in the slightest degree hasten the disestablishment of the Church of England by binding it up with the Church of Wales, nor would they in the least degree put it off by endeavouring to conceal from themselves that every logical argument which was aimed at the Church in Wales also hit the Church in England. Of course, he knew there was one argument—the argument as to nationality—which was put forward with regard to the Church in Wales, and was not put forward with respect to the Church in England, but notwithstanding that, he was satisfied that when the enemies of the Church of England came forward to attack that Church they would not refuse the aid of Scottish Presbyterians, Welsh Methodists, or Irish Roman Catholics, because they had disestablished, or endeavoured to disestablish, the Welsh Church in the name of nationality. He was speaking on the present occasion because he believed the attack which was being made was an attack on all connection between Church and State, and because he believed that if it succeeded it would have far-reaching consequences which he firmly hoped some of those who supported the Bill did not anticipate—consequences which he firmly believed would be prejudicial to the State even more than to the Church. For his part, he believed that whatever they might do the Church rested on a more sure foundation. It was high as Heaven, and they would never cast it down, but they were not for that reason to throw away the temporal aids which had been given to the Church, not for National purposes only but for National purposes in connection with religion, and for those alone. With regard to those aids, they had seen a great development through the range of history. It had been to a certain degree, no doubt, a development, but there was such a thing as degeneracy as well as development. He should not like to go back to the first stage in the history of that question, when every sect was not only satisfied to preach what they believed to be the truth, but persecuted to the death those who differed from them. Then came the second stage in which, though persecution no longer existed, the full measure of toleration was only given to one particular branch, and others had certain civil disabilities attached to them. He was not going to argue the third stage of the question, when they took away certain endowments given to the Church for purposes of education and handed them over to other institutions, but he was bound to refer to what he conceived to be the fourth development with regard to this question. Not merely were they told that they must tolerate every description of faith—not merely were they told that they must not inflict any disability on those who differed from them, but that they must strip the existing establishments of the endowments which were given to them and remove them from the position which they held because they were, owing, forsooth, to those endowments and the position which the State gave them, placed in some position of 'vantage with regard to various Nonconformist Bodies. He did not like to prophesy, but he could not help believing that if this was carried out they would find here what they had found in other countries where the attempt was made to divorce a State from religion—they would find that it would be said that religion was the enemy of the State, and it would become the business of those who occupied positions on the Ministerial Benches in great measure not merely to sever the connection between the State and the Church, but to strive to the best of their ability to do away with all kinds of religious teaching whatever. He saw the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bryce) making a note of this remark, and had no doubt that if the right hon. Gentleman did condescend to take notice of his statements he would tell them that the arguments he had just been using did not find support from the experience of the United States. The right hon. Gentleman would, perhaps, ask him whether he believed in that great Anglo-Saxon community of the United States the fact that there was no State religion had to any degree done away with the fondness for religion there? But a wide distinction should be drawn between the history of the United States in this matter and the various communities which existed in Europe at the present moment. The fact was to be borne in mind that the American Commonwealth started its existence at a period when nobody had any hostility to religion as religion. Moreover, although it was true they never established any State religion in that country, the right hon. Gentleman, if he had read, as of course he had done, *The Scarlet Letter*, or the history of the times with which *The Scarlet Letter* dealt, would admit that, although there was no establishment of religion by the State, there existed certainly no indisposition to put even penal laws in force in America for the purpose, not of establishing this or that branch of religion, but the religious principles and the morality which it was his desire on the present occasion to defend. He was convinced that the English people, who, after all, were the masters in this matter, would be hostile to the Bill if they understood its full bearings; and, personally, he wished them to realise for themselves what was the full measure of confiscation which was at the present moment proposed with regard to the Church endowments. They had on Thursday last a speech of great ability from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in asking leave to introduce the Bill. No one who listened to it could doubt that the right hon. Gentleman entirely understood almost every detail of the plan which the Government proposed, but hon. Members would agree that it was a speech as different as possible from what they would have had in like circumstances from the Member for Midlothian. It was not the speech of a man who was trying to cure a disease or do away with a fault in an institution, but rather the speech of a man who was dissecting a living organism before a class. It was a speech of a vivisector and a critic rather than of a sympathiser in any shape or form. He was not going to deal with the details of the measure; but he should like to contrast it with the measure for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, brought forward by a man who was, at any rate, sympathetic with the religious idea. No one who heard that marvellous speech could forget the allusion which the right hon. Member for Midlothian made to the Archbishop of Dublin—

> "*Nec te tua plurima, Pantheu,*
> *Labantem pietas nec Palladis infula texit.*"

There was nothing like that in the speech of the right hon. Member for Fife. If this measure had been designed merely for the purpose of getting rid of an open sore, there would, no doubt, have been the same method of commutation as that which existed in the Bill with regard to the disestablishment of the Irish Church. He did not say it would have been so with regard to all the details, but he did say that unquestionably there would have been, as there was with regard to the Irish Church, a method of commutation. It would have been in the Bill, in the first place, because it would have brought the measure into working order in a short time; and, in the second place, because it would have allowed the Welsh Church to go away with some endowment of her own, and not to go into the cold absolutely stripped and naked. Although everything pointed to commutation, and although the Welsh Members who desired to see this Bill brought into effect as soon as possible might on that ground have desired commutation, yet, merely because it was impossible to conceive a scheme which would have left the Welsh Church with some endowments as the Irish Church was left with its endowments, the Government had thought proper to give the go-by to the natural method of dealing with such a question as this. They had merely left the Welsh clergy with their life interests in the performance of duties which he prophesied very shortly indeed it would be unnecessary for them to perform. The Government handed over the churches to the Welsh clergy. He did not thank them for that. The churches were held by no other title than the title by which the Welsh Church held its other endowments, and he believed the sole reason why the Government had left the churches to the Welsh Church was because they knew how repugnant it would be to the feelings of every right-minded man to see those buildings put to uses which any person might think proper. The hon. Gentleman in his speech sneered at the manner in which those who had the interest of the Irish Church at heart dealt with the question of endowment, as if it was a case of the greed of the individual which induced them to obtain as much money as possible. He did not think anyone who had really studied the history of that question, and who desired to do justice to opponents, did not know that the object of all the various measures which were taken at the time was to save as much as possible of the endowments which were given to the Protestant religion in Ireland. They were justified in doing everything which was possible to save what they could for the Disestablished Church. An endeavour had been made on the present occasion to draw a parallel between the question of patronage in the Scotch Church and the question of patronage in the present case. He did not propose to go into the very interesting facts put forward by the Leader of the Opposition; but he could not help thinking, when listening to the speech of the Home Secretary, that he was hardly doing justice to himself or to his opponents in drawing a parallel so fallacious. Would anyone who candidly dealt with this question deny that the circumstances were completely different? Apart altogether from any motives of greed, he, for one, would do what he could to get as much compensation as possible for the purpose of handing it over to the sorely-despoiled Church. With regard to the question of churchyards, it was useless to shut their eyes to what the consequences would be if the Bill was carried into effect. When the Burials Bill was being discussed in the House of Commons they were told how wrong and cruel it was to bring their political fights into graveyards. Then he and those who opposed the Bill said they would be delighted to see Dissenters buried in those churchyards, but that if the measure was carried it would be put forward as a ground that they should be taken away from the Church. He was no untrue prophet, for that very thing had taken place. This Debate must necessarily be a short one, and he knew there were many others who desired to speak on the Bill. He probably should not occupy a place in another House of Commons, and if this was the last speech he made in a House where he had occupied a seat for nearly 20 years, he should be thankful that he had been given the opportunity to protest against legislation which, he believed, was for the worst interests both of the Church and of the State. He himself had never said an uncharitable word against the great Nonconformist Body; but he should like to hear what those great men who were the founders of Welsh Methodism, and who took up the cause of religion at a time when he was free to admit the Church was to a great extent neglecting its duties, would say if they were alive at the present moment. What would they say of a measure which said that money dedicated to the service of God might be devoted to any purpose other than that of religious instruction and teaching? He himself believed that if, instead of these political controversies, all those who had the fear of God before them would strive as far as possible to combat the forces of irreligion and atheism, instead of wasting their strength against one another, they would be strong indeed. God forbid that he should say a word against the great Nonconformist Bodies. He knew what his Master said when He found men casting out Devils in His name, and others strove to forbid them because they followed not Him. He knew that the great Dissenting Body, like the body to which he had the honour to belong, had cast out the devils of intemperance, and crime, and foul living, and God forbid that other bodies should say them nay, but rather that such as could should band themselves together against these iniquities, and unitedly strive to advocate what they all held dear.

*MR.. D. THOMAS (Glamorganshire, E.) said, he made no apology for trespassing on the patience of the House, because whilst he had been in the House for half a dozen years he had never spoken on this subject, although it was the one of all others in which his constituents had a deep interest; and, moreover, he might not have an opportunity at a later stage of the Bill. It seemed rather hard, and as far as he could gather this was the argument of the last speaker, to say that they should not have disestablishment in Wales because hon. Members in England did not want it for their country. The hon. Member said the only ground which differentiated the case of England from that of Wales was that of nationality. But he claimed they had a very much stronger reason than that. Some of his friends around him, he knew, did not attach as much importance as he did to the statistical argument, but it was that which really made their case. It was the fact that Wales had an overwhelming preponderance of opinion in favour of disestablishment; that constituted their grievance, and gave them a claim to come to Parliament and ask for separate treatment. He attached the greatest importance to the statistical argument. The right hon. Member for West Bristol said it was not enough for them to show they had 31 to three in favour of Welsh disestablishment, but that electoral votes should be taken into account also. He was quite prepared to meet the right hon. Gentleman on that ground. If the aggregate net majority cast at the last Election for Liberal candidates in Wales were divided among the Liberal Representatives in this House, it gave them something like a majority of 2,000 apiece. It was not merely 33 to 1, but their majority was larger on this question than any majority the House had ever known on any great question that had come before the country. Supposing the same line of argument was taken with regard to the majority which the Conservative Party had at the Election of 1886 they would find, if they took the aggregate net majority of the Conservative Party of that year and divided it by the number of the Conservative Members who constituted the majority in the last Parliament, that their majority was not 10 per cent. of the majority the Liberal Members for Wales had upon this question. If they went back to the Election of 1874, he believed it was an absolute fact that the Conservative votes then recorded at the polls were less than the aggregate Liberal votes, and yet the Conservative Party were returned to power with a large majority in this House, and though they had received less votes than the Liberals they professed to represent the feelings and the wishes of the people of this country, and for six years they stuck like leeches to the Treasury Bench. He should like also to say something about the character of this majority they had in Wales, and he would give evidence the value of which he did not think hon. Members opposite would be prepared to dispute or question. He referred to a sermon which was preached a few years ago almost within the shadow of this House—namely, at St. Margaret's, by a very high dignitary of the Church in Wales, Archdeacon Howell, who was respected by all who knew him, friends and political opponents alike. The sermon was published in pamphlet form, and *The Western Mail*, the Conservative paper of Cardiff, described the sermon as one of the best Church Defence pamphlets ever issued. What did Archdeacon Howell say as regarded the majority in Wales? He said—

> "Above all other causes was the weakness of the Church due to the fact that so much of the best blood of the nation no longer ran in her veins. Those who were banded together for the

disestablishment and disendowment of the Church were men of unquestioned religious character, whose lives bore witness to their piety and sincerity; and with regard to the unquestionable fact that the majority of the people were not found within the pale of the Church, there was the equally unquestionable fact that her adherents were largely made up of English settlers and Anglicised Welshmen, not of the Welsh-speaking masses, who held the future of the Principality in their hands. Hence her opponents spoke of her not as historically an alien Church, but as now the Church of aliens."

He could give more extracts to the same effect, but he would not detain the House with them, and he would now deal with the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, who referred to the progress made by the Church, in the Rhondda Valley especially. He had not a word to say against the clergy in Wales at the present day, and he did not want to go into ancient history. He believed the clergy to-day were an extremely earnest and zealous body of men, who were prepared to make great sacrifices for their religion, but that was not the point at all. He was not prepared to say that in some districts possibly the Church might not have made some little progress, but the progress, such as it was, was very small indeed. With regard to the progress of the Church in the Rhondda Valley, he had sat on the local Board of the district, and knew the district well. It was true that a number of churches had been built there in recent years, but in the district there was a population of 100,000 people, which had not sprung up altogether during the last year or two, and he asked the House how it would have fared with religion in the Rhondda Valley had not the Nonconformist chapels been erected in the proportion of six to every church? And with regard to the churches that had been built in recent years, he found by the Llandaff Church Diocesan Calendar for the present year that while the population of certain districts of the Rhondda Valley was 80,000, there was only church sitting accommodation for 5,838. There was not sitting accommodation in the churches for one-tenth of the population, a fact which did not say very much for the progress of the Church in the Rhondda Valley. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight had also said that as certain statistics showed that barely 50 per cent. of the population of Wales belonged to the Nonconformist denominations, it was right to argue that the other 50 per cent. necessarily belonged to the Church. Surely that was a most ridiculous argument for any reasonable and fair man to put forward in an Assembly like the House of Commons. He did not think that the Church could claim 10 per cent. of the population of Wales as regular attendants—his hon. Friend the Member for the Carmarthen Boroughs had put the Church communiants at 6 per cent. That, however, in his judgment, was at least double the actual figure; but supposing the Church showed that 10 per cent. of the population of Wales were regular church-goers, would the Nonconformists be right in saying that the other 90 per cent. belonged to them? And yet, that was what the argument of the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight amounted to. He would like to offer some criticism on one material point in the Bill. While he approved heartily of the Bill generally, he had a serious objection to the proposal, in which he had been anticipated by the Leader of the Opposition, as to the allocation of the funds. The Home Secretary proposed in this Bill to divide the ecclesiastical endowments into two funds—a central, or national fund, to which the monies now going to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to be returned, and a parochial or local fund, to be made up of all the parochial endowments now going to the incumbents of the various parishes. That was a great and vital change from the principles of the Irish Church Act. He regretted that the Government had departed from the principle of the Irish Church Act in this matter, and had treated tithe as parochial rather than as national property. The Home Secretary stated that he had endeavoured to meet the wishes of the Welsh people on this point, but he did not know how the right hon. Gentleman had ascertained them, and, certainly, the right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to carry out the wishes of the smaller portion of the Welsh people. A few months ago the North Wales Liberal Federation passed a resolution practically in the direction of the policy which had been adopted in the Bill; but shortly afterwards the South Wales Liberal Federation passed a resolution to the effect that tithes, being national property, should be devoted to national and not to parochial purposes. The South Wales Liberal Federation covered an area which was, as regards population, three times that of North Wales, but the right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to carry out the wishes of the small portion and not the larger portion of South Wales. They had always fought this question on national, and not on parochial grounds. They had always maintained that tithes were national property, and should be devoted to national purposes, and he was surprised to see what he conceived to be a change of front on the part of the Government in this matter. He was surprised the Government should have embodied this particular policy in their Bill, because the last time the Chancellor of the Exchequer was down in Wales at Carnarvon he put forward the national view, and not the parochial view of this question. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I was reading only the other day a speech by one of the Liberal Unionists, Mr. Courtney. He is an excellent man, but a little bit cranky. He is a very honest man. Indeed, he is so honest that he is not able to agree with any one except himself. He made what I think a very sensible remark about Welsh disestablishment. He had not made up his mind; he was going to keep an open mind. I have always observed that, when a man has an open mind, it means that he has not a mind at all."

So it was clear the Chancellor of the Exchequer had definitely made up his mind in that time. He said that the time had arrived when the Church of Wales must cease to exist. He went on to say that the tithe must not be frittered away. One of the objections he (Mr. Thomas) had to the proposed scheme for the allocation of the funds was that they would be frittered away and be devoted very largely to objects which were already provided for by the rates, and that by so doing they would ultimately be putting the money into the pockets of the landlords. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in that speech had gone on to say that he wanted this national property to be

> "communicated and communicable to the whole people," and "to be suitable and attainable by everyone of the Welsh people."

But by the Bill five-sixths of the tithe would go to the parochial fund and one-sixth to the national fund. He hoped the latter fraction did not measure the influence of the right hon. Gentleman among his colleagues, for he attached far more value to the political sagacity and experience of the right hon. Gentleman than he did to that of some of the doctrinaire experimenters who sat with him in the Cabinet. But the "final settlement," he understood, had been arrived at in a somewhat hurried manner, and must, therefore, not be too closely scrutinised at this stage. By the Bill tithe would be most unfairly and inequitably distributed. The people of the parishes from which the tithes were derived would, in many cases, get only a very small share, if, indeed, any direct benefit from them at all. He trusted that there would be a Return made of what the parochial endowments of the different parishes really amounted to. Such a Return should certainly be laid on the Table of the House before the Second Reading of the Bill. There were many parishes, as the Bill then stood, in which nearly the whole of the tithes-rates would pass into the pockets of the lay impropriators. It was no exaggeration to say that from a fourth to a fifth of the tithe rent charge in Wales went to lay impropriators. Surely such a state of things was never contemplated by the pious ancestors who were alleged to have given those tithes in ancient days. In his own constituency, in the Aberdare Valley, numbering over 50,000 persons, no one would gain anything at all out of the parochial fund. On the other hand, in the parish where his house was situated, when the tithe, which was worth nearly £100, came to be allocated, the wishes of his only two fellow-parishioners, a small farmer and a blacksmith, and himself would have to be mainly and primarily considered. He would call a meeting as soon as he got down there, and see how best they could divide the sum for their uses and wishes, although he hoped it would be some time before his friend the rector gave them the opportunity of dividing it. He would only, in conclusion, congratulate the Home Secretary on having introduced the Bill. He was much gratified at its introduction, and although he objected to some of its important details, yet he should give it his hearty support.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.) said, the arguments of the promoters of the Bill must be founded either on principle or expediency. They must, however, have felt themselves precluded from founding them on principle, since the Prime Minister had declared to the country that he was equally in favour of establishment or disestablishment. They must therefore have founded their argument on expediency, and it was very remarkable that the same Government who founded their arguments in favour of disestablishment in Wales, on the ground that the majority of the people demanded it, should at the same time refuse to give the majority of the Irish people any choice in the matter of establishment in their Home Rule Bill. He would like to examine the exact weight of the figures put forward by the supporters of the measure. The Home Secretary based his argument on the return of 31 out of 34 Members. But what did the votes show? In 1885 the votes cast for disestablishment were 125,000, and against 80,000. That gave the Church more than one-third of the voters. In 1892 the fight was not a fair and square fight, because some of the Unionist Members were in favour of disestablishment, and he not only subtracted all the votes given for those candidates from the votes given for the Church, but he had added them to the votes given for disestablishment. The result was 139,000 for disestablishment and 69,000 against. Therefore, in 1892 one-third still remained favourable to the Church.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint, &c.): May I ask the noble Lord whether he has taken any account of the uncontested elections?

VISCOUNT WOLMER said, that in an argument of this kind one was obliged to take the figures that were available, and could not go into hypothetical matters such as what would have happened if there had been contests in the uncontested constituencies. But the figures were perfectly good for the purpose of his comparison, because the figures of 1885 and the figures of 1892 were extraordinarily approximately similar, and about the same number of constituencies were contested at each election. Therefore, in the General Election of 1892, one-third of the electors still remained in favour of the Church and against disestablishment. The last example was to be found in the bye-election for the County of Montgomery. In that constituency the proportion of votes recorded for the Church candidate in 1885 was three out of seven. In 1886 it was eight out of 17, in 1892 three out of seven, and in 1894, 16 out of 33. He thought that put on its true basis the argument deduced from figures. But figures were absolutely worthless, because they precluded the votes of half the population. No women could vote on this question, a question of all others on which, as the late Professor Fawcet—himself a strong disestablisher—had said, women had as much right to be heard as men.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS: The women are the strongest disestablishers in Wales.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER said, that might be, or might not be; but he maintained that the women had a perfect right to vote. Another argument was that the Church was in Wales an alien Church. But it had been proved that the founders of Noncomformity in Wales had been strongly attached to the Church, a fact which showed that in their view it was not an alien Church. An attempt had been made to show that during the great Methodist movement of the last century the Church was really alien to the religious sentiment of the people of Wales. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had conclusively disproved that in his great speech on this subject in 1870. But the hon. Member for Carnarvon had taken them back 700 years, and had tried to harrow their feelings by recitals of the differences between Welsh Princes and Welsh Nationalists, and Norman Kings and Prelates, in the Middle Ages. It was absurd to ask them to judge these events by the standards of the 19th century, by the standards of the 12th and 13th centuries—at the very time when an analogous struggle was being made in England, and not when the Saxon Bishops were being ousted by the Norman Bishops, and when even the English language was tabooed in favour of Norman French. It was beside the question to take the House back to those days in order to show that religious differences existed in Wales. It was making discussion ridiculous to ask them to hold up their hands in horror because some persons resented the action of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the King of England with regard to Wales in the 13th century. The right hon. Gentleman the Home

Secretary only touched lightly on this argument. He had said that the existence of the Church was associated with injurious and humiliating memories. He Viscount Wolmer) agreed with the right hon. Gentleman. What was the history of these memories? It was the history of the action of the Home Secretaries and Prime Ministers of the last century, who had used the Church in Wales for political purposes just as the present Government were trying to use it. The whole of this discussion had centred round the question of disestablishment, but, as had been pointed out, disestablishment was not the question. Was there any Welsh Member who would accept disestablishment without disendowment? Not one. But there were many who, supposing they could not get both, would take disendowment without disestablishment. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had made no attempt to deal with the question of principle. He was reserving himself for the Second Reading. All he had told them was that the Church was an aggressive sectarian power singled out by the State for certain privileges. Aggressive! By that they meant proselytising. No Church worthy of the name could be other than aggressive in this sense. To charge the Church with sectarianism when her opponents who had separated themselves from her were responsible seemed to him a singular mode of conducting the controversy. And when was the Church singled out for certain privileges, and why was she singled out, and who singled her out? When they came to the question of Disendowment, really the Home Secretary might have taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the elements of the case. He talked of national property. Perhaps on the Second Reading the right hon. Gentleman would kindly explain what researches he had made to prove Professor Freeman wrong when he said—

> "The endowments of the Established Church rest on exactly the same ground as the endowments of Dissenting Bodies. People sometimes forget that there are such things as Dissenting endowments. Now, the difference between these endowments and the endowments of the Church is simply this, that the endowments of the Church are much greater in extent and of much older date than those of the Dissenting Bodies."

After alluding to this question in his speech on the Suspensory Bill last year, the right hon. Gentleman said he would relegate to the museum of political antiquities all talk about sacrilege. Well, the word "sacrilege" was one which had been a good deal abused and misunderstood. He would quote again from Professor Freeman, who said—

> "The question must not be confused by talk about national property on the one hand and about sacrilege on the other. It is simply a question whether a great and supreme change, but one which the supreme power has a right to make, is or is not called for by the general interests of the country."

The Government accepted Professor Freeman's statement that there was in this matter no question of sacrilege, they must also accept his assertion that there was equally no question of national property, and the only difference between Church and Nonconformist endowments was that the former were more numerous and of greater antiquity. He (Viscount Wolmer) believed that the best use to which property could be dedicated was the service of religion, and to take it away from that service and devote it to municipal purposes was a frightful degradation of its use. An hon. Member asked whether the original donors intended that the tithes should go to lay impropriators. Of course they did not, but it was Henry VIII., the true political ancestor of the present Government, who first diverted them.

SIR W. HARCOURT: And the Reformation.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: Henry VIII. was the political power of the time.

SIR W. HARCOURT: He was a great reformer.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: A truly moral guide!

*VISCOUNT WOLMER said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted himself to be the political successor of Henry VIII., and he would not dispute his ancestry. It was Henry VIII. who was responsible for the existence of lay impropriators; and in the verdict of history there would be very little to choose between the dedication of Henry VIII. of the funds of the Church to his personal favourites and their dedication by the present Government to their political supporters. The Home Secretary had promised to carefully safeguard all vested interests, but one class of people for whom the Bill showed no consideration were the parishioners who now enjoyed the legacies of their ancestors. The Home Secretary said that the Nonconformists raised £400,000 a year, and asked whether the Church could not do as much. At the present moment the Church in Wales raised £250,000 a year, absolutely apart from her ancient endowments, for the work of her communion in that country, and not taking into account strictly private donations. Her endowments were, roughly, another £250,000 a year, so that, if the Bill passed, £500,000 a year would have to be raised simply to maintain her present position by a Church, which was said by her enemies to represent only a tenth or twelfth of the inhabitants, against £400,000 raised by the Nonconformists, who were said to be many times more numerous.

An hon. MEMBER: And four times as poor.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER: But the landlords of Wales, who the enemies of the Church declared to be the main support of the Church in that country, were far from being rich men, and they were not in a position to find that large sum. What would be the spiritual condition of that country if the Church were compelled to rest upon her oars for want of funds? Though the Nonconformists were now present, it was the Church who covered the ground. He knew this point had been raised before, but, as it was a complete refutation of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, he ventured to raise it again. How could the Home Secretary maintain that the voluntary contributions of the Nonconformists covered the ground when he knew that 90 parishes in the diocese of St. Asaph alone had no resident Nonconformist minister? Was the right hon. Gentleman willing that there should not only be an absence of Nonconformist ministers, but of ministers of the Church as well? Did the right hon. Gentleman contemplate with equanimity that the Church and Nonconformity would both fail to cover the ground, which was covered at present? The hon. Member who had addressed the House last had excused the shortcomings of this measure on the ground that it had been prepared in a hurried manner. He did not know what ground the hon. Member had for making that statement, but as the Government had not denied it, it might be taken that the Bill had been prepared in a hurried manner. Well, in the Second Reading speech of the Home Secretary, to which they were all looking forward with so much anxiety, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make good the defects and omissions in the Bill. The preparation of the measure must have been extremely hurried. The only point not hurried was probably the determination to give worse terms to the Welsh Church than that given to Ireland. He was not going to dwell on that point, but would simply ask the House to imagine what this Bill meant. There was to be no commutation—no allowance at all. It was the starting out of a Religious Body for which they all professed unbounded good wishes with a year of grace to remodel its organisation, with the endowments of seven centuries taken away from it in a single Session. The Government said, "We are perfectly certain that the Church is hampered by its connection with the State, and that she will show more fruitful work when disestablished." Had they considered that it would be necessary that this Church, which had been devoting its energies to combating irreligion and vice for the past 700 years, would be called upon to reorganise itself in 12 months? Had they considered that the best work and intellect of the Church would have to be devoted to reorganisation for a generation, and that funds would have to be found to replace the endowments which had been taken from her. The Government intended that she should start afresh, and would send her out—apart from vested interests—penniless. He refused to give the Government any credit for not taking the fabrics of the churches, which had been so long maintained by voluntary contributions. It would have been an act of villainous robbery to take from Churchmen the fabrics they themselves had built and maintained. No Nonconformist body ever started under such conditions as those under which the Disestablished Church was expected to reorganise itself in 12 months. Curates were essential to the work of the Church; and when the Home Secretary said that the incumbents and wealthy laymen must find the means of paying them, he forgot that the Bill cast upon the clergy and the laity the whole task of re-supplying the endowments of the Church. At the very moment when counselling the Church to maintain its assistant clergy, he refused to help it to maintain its existing obligations. In order to avoid what all admitted to have been a scandal in connection with the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the Bill would produce another scandal in Wales by leaving curates unprovided for. He had only one word to say as to the destination of the present endowment funds. He was prepared to say that the destination of the money taken from the Church was the relief of rates, and that meant nothing less than replacing the tithes into the pockets of the landowners. The money was to go for the building of public parish or district halls (which meant saving the rates), or to instituting public libraries, or supporting higher education, and allotments, and so forth, all of which meant saving the rates or taxes. They had hardly hoped to see the time when the advocates of Disestablishment would propose a Bill putting back into the pockets of the landowners the money they had paid in tithes.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge): From whose pockets does it come?

VISCOUNT WOLMER: From the pockets of the landowners. Was anyone still to be found to say that tithe was paid by the tenant and not by the landowner? If so, he would not find any support on the Treasury Bench. If the tithe were abolished to-morrow, the whole benefit would go to the pockets of the landowners, and the application of these funds to the rates was nothing more nor less than returning the tithes to the pockets of the landowners.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): There were two or three Bills in another place in which it was attempted to impose it on the tenants.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: Is the hon. Member not aware that the late Government passed a Bill to collect the tithe from the landowners?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But the Opposition tried to put it on the tenant.

VISCOUNT WOLMER said, the hon. Member must have forgotten the history of the last Parliament. The whole struggle over the tithe question in the last Parliament was owing to the fact that the advocates of disestablishment tried to prove that tithe was really paid by the tenant, and that the Government were determined that it should not only be paid by, but collected from, the landlords.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The first Bill of the late Government proposed to put the tithe on the tenant. We opposed that proposal and defeated it.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I beg to deny that statement.

*VISCOUNT WOLMER said, there appeared to be some difference of opinion on this matter, but one thing he could confidently assert, that if the Bill attempted to put the tithe on the tenants it could not have been there already. He wished to make one allusion to a remark by the Home Secretary in his speech introducing the Welsh Suspensory Bill last year, a remark which, no doubt, he would repeat again. It was—

> "Are the friends of the Church wise in refusing absolutely to be parties to treating the Church of Wales as otherwise than an integral part of the Church of England?"

That was touching them, not on the temporal, but on the spiritual side of the Church. The Church in Wales was, in their opinion, with the Church in England one spiritual body, and they would far rather be disestablished and disendowed together than one separately. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members laughed because they failed to appreciate the strength of the Church feeling. He had never when contemplating their point of view doubted the strength of their religious convictions either as Methodists or Baptists, and he thought it was quite time that they began to realise that Churchmen felt quite as strongly on the matter. They regarded this proposal to sever four dioceses from the Church as a deliberate attempt on the spiritual life of the Church, for those dioceses were part and parcel of the whole Spiritual and Religious Body to which they were attached as a whole. It was all very well to say that the Church if disestablished would hereafter prove stronger and most useful. He was not for one moment going to pretend that disestablishment or disendowment would kill or maim the Church. The Church had strength which came from other sources than Governments or political Parties. But what this Bill and a similar Bill for England would do was that it would divert the whole work of the Church, now devoted to combating evil, into the task of reorganisation for a generation. The advocates of this Bill failed to realise the magnitude of the enterprise before them. It was not possible to root out a Church which had existed for seven centuries and think it could start again afresh next day. If the work of centuries were to be maintained with efficiency it could only be done after a generation of reorganisation, and the real effect of a Bill of this kind would be to cripple for one generation the advance of religion through the agency of the Church, and on the temporal side to afford a precedent for the disturbance of historical associations and ancient institutions of which no Government could measure the full effect. Let hon. Members who supported this Bill try and use their imaginative faculties a little. They seemed to think Churchmen could look at this question with the same philosophical eye as on a Bill for local government. They forgot that the whole highest convictions of Churchmen were rooted in their Church; they believed the endowments that came from 700 years ago were the same in character as the endowments of to-day, and they could not understand why they should be singled out alone from the Religious Bodies of this country for the confiscation of those endowments which other Religious Bodies equally enjoyed and which Churchmen never desired or wished to take from them.

The CHANCELLOR of the DUCHY of LANCASTER (Mr. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): In endeavouring to reply to the criticisms which have been passed in various quarters on this Bill, I shall deal first with those which relate to the provisions which the Bill contains, and afterwards very shortly with those which touch the general policy of the Government that underlies the Bill. And feeling the force of what was said by the noble Lord, and recognising the very deep feelings that many hon. Members have on this question, I shall endeavour as far as possible to avoid anything that can arouse angry feelings or that is calculated to prevent the provisions of the plan from being considered on their merits. The principal criticism which has been directed against the scheme of the Bill is that it departs from the Irish Church Act in not at once liquidating and winding up the whole property of the Church, by buying out existing incumbents and making compensation for all existing offices. When we saw that the *corpus* of property having been placed there within the reach of Parliament had been disposed of, we concluded that it was much better to try to reserve for the people of Wales—which is a very poor country, and whose country parishes have very great need for the provision of some public money in aid of public objects—we conceived that, on the whole, it would be better to depart from the Irish Act and to endeavour to safeguard this property for Welsh purposes. Under this plan of graduated disendowment, the disestablished Church will be called upon only by degrees to find money to replace the fund taken from her, and in that way no sudden or severe strain is being imposed on her. It will thus be far more easy for her to deal with the property which lies before her than if we had attempted to liquidate the fund at once. In the interest of the Church itself there is, therefore, a great deal to be said for the plan to be adopted in the Bill, while as regards the interest of the Welsh people the advantages of the present scheme seem to be incontestable. The next criticism which has been made by several Members, and with especial warmth by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, was as to the course proposed with regard to cathedrals. We had to face the question, what was to be done with these venerable national buildings which the nation regard as a priceless possession. Hitherto they have been to a certain extent under State control——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: To what extent?

Mr. BRYCE: It has been so recognised as the general law, and that if these buildings were to be handed over to a private Corporation it would be said that the rights of the nation had been lost. We are absolutely bound to safeguard the interest which the nation feels in these possessions which come down as our common and priceless inheritance, and the best way to do that is to relieve the disestablished Church from the cost, which might be very heavy, of keeping these buildings in repair.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: We have paid for it already.

MR. BRYCE: We prefer that the Welsh Commissioners should undertake the charge, but we conceive that we have completely safeguarded the interests of the Church in these buildings by making it the duty of the Commission to allow these buildings to be used by the disestablished Church for its services.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Exclusively, and for no other purpose?

MR. BRYCE: These buildings are to be used in the way they have been hitherto used, for the purposes of the service of the Established Church. The hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, in a speech to which the House listened with great pleasure, not only on account of the eloquent precision of its language, but because of the high tone and the conciliatory and genial spirit which pervaded it, took exception to the expression "national monuments" used by the Home Secretary. He said that these cathedral churches were built for the worship of the Church of England. Would it not be more correct to say they were erected for the public worship of God at a time when the Church of England included every class of the community? They come down to us from the earlier Middle Ages, and it is our duty to safeguard in them now the interests of all those classes and denominations of Welshmen who are represented by the descendants from those Middle Ages.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: Will all Welshmen be allowed to use them?

MR. BRYCE: All Welshmen will be allowed to consider them as their possession and treasure, and the use of them for religious worship is to be given to the Established Church.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: Exclusively?

MR. BRYCE: I have already twice stated how they are to be used. The Leader of the Opposition remarked on the disparities which the tithe presents in various parishes in Wales, and he asked whether it was right that the tithe should be appropriated entirely to the purpose of the particular parish in which it happened to exist, leaving other parishes in which there are no tithes unprovided for. In the first place, I should say that these disparities are not of our making. We find them, and it is not for us to throw into one melting pot all the property of the Church and redistribute it. Still less would the House desire us to embark upon a policy by means of which the tithes of an agricultural parish which greatly needs them would be handed over to rich towns like Swansea. But in regard to these and other points I would ask hon. Members to reserve their judgment until they see the words of the Bill. We do not propose that the tithes which belong to a particular parish should necessarily continue allocated to that parish alone. All we contemplate is that in the allocation of the funds there should be due regard to the interests of the parish, but the scheme is to be framed with a view to the interests of the country at large. So long as the benefit is applied in some form to the parish, it is not necessary to attach that tithe to the parish. As regards the case of the advowsons put by the Leader of the Opposition, I would point out, as to his remarks on the validity of the Scotch question, that a peculiar right attaching to the power of presentation was recognised by the Scotch Act, and the advowson was treated as having a saleable value. We hold by the precedent set by the Conservative Government in 1874, when it was determined not to settle the value by arbitration, but to fix the value of one year, and on that to base the compensation. We base ourselves on that precedent. As a matter of fact, we are unable to say that there is any market value for these livings at all; indeed, a sale of them is very uncommon, as most of them are in the hands of Public Bodies. The value, too, is very small, the average being about £147 per annum. As regards the case of the curates, I must observe that with regard to the curates in Ireland there were special circumstances attaching to them. To a large extent they did the work of the absentee incumbent. But that is not the fact with the curates in Wales, and in cases where the Ecclesiastical Commissioners pay the incumbent the sum for the salary of the curate that sum will continue to be paid during the tenancy of the present incumbent. I have now briefly referred, I think, to the principal criticisms made on the provisions of the Bill. The Bill itself will give further information. I ought, perhaps, to say one word about the suggestion that the result of the application of the funds to local purposes will be to relieve the rates. It is not our wish that this money should go to the relief of the rates, and we shall take proper steps to prevent such an application of the funds. But I do not myself believe that there will be any disposition at all to defray out of this money the cost of public works which can be, and ought to be, properly thrown on the rates. I will say that our general object has been, while endeavouring to preserve the property for the benefit of Wales in the future, to deal with the utmost fairness and justice with all persons who have got vested life interests. I appeal in proof of that desire not only to the provision we have made that every clergyman shall be entitled to retain his living and the whole of the income and emoluments thereof for his life, but also to the fact that, whereas in the Irish Act the clergy or representative body of the disestablished Church were obliged to buy parsonages, we have given parsonages to the disestablished Church, and in that respect have gone further to meet the claims of the clergy than was done in the Irish Act of 1869. I know that these criticisms will not disarm the rooted objections which the Opposition entertain to the Bill as a whole. It appeared to me that the right hon. Member for West Bristol, when he heard my right hon. Friend engaged in the exposition of his scheme, was a little disappointed that it was not worse. He had, I think, been so long brooding over the terrible schemes with which Mr. Gee has frightened the world that he was surprised, and perhaps not altogether pleased, to find our scheme much more moderate and conciliatory than that of Mr. Gee; and I believe that is the judgment which will be passed upon it. In dealing with ecclesiastical property as sacrilege and plunder, I should like to refresh the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman by reading a few words from a remarkable speech which was delivered in 1869 by one of the brightest luminaries of the English Church in the last generation, and who has already been referred to to-night in terms not above his eminence and fame by my hon. Friend the Member for the University of Cambridge. The late Bishop of St. David's, in speaking on the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill, after referring to the famous case of St. Ambrose and his selling the sacred vessels, went on to deal with the case in which the term sacrilege was applied to the taking of the property of the Church. He said circumstances might arise in which Church property might be rightly diverted into other channels on grounds of general expediency, and, therefore, the use of such an expression as "sacrilegious robbery" was irrelevant, misapplied, irritating, and offensive. That speech was delivered in support of the proposal for the disendowment of the Irish Church. I will not enter into the long entangled question of national property further than to say that anyone who has studied the question will admit that this property is property which was given to individual churches at particular times, but which has been frequently used and disposed of by the nation. It will be admitted, even by the noble Lord the Member for West Edinburgh, that in dealing with that property we cannot be said to lack a precedent. That property, although continued in the Established Church of the country, was dealt with in the 16th century by being transferred from those who held one set of doctrines to another, and back again.

Viscount WOLMER: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly name the Acts of Parliament?

Mr. BRYCE: The Acts of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth. It is property which the nation has always felt itself at liberty to deal with, and will be dealt with again. There is not a Roman Catholic country in Europe in which either at the time of the Reformation or within the present century an immense quantity of Church property has not been taken by the State on grounds of common utility. I admit this is a question, not of right, but of utility. It is a question which depends entirely whether a proper occasion has been shown for dealing with the property. We have endeavoured to show that this is an occasion which justifies an interference with this property, and we conceive that it would be hard to find a stronger case than that of a body which is the Church of only one-third or one-fourth of the Welsh people, and which can have no claim to be considered their national Church, not upon any historical grounds, which are too remote for us to enter upon, but upon the plain fact that the current of the national religious life has deserted that channel and has flowed in other channels. We are asked what our motives are, and on what we ground this Bill. The Duke of Devonshire first laid down the admirable Liberal principle that the wishes of a distinct part of the United Kingdom ought to be allowed to prevail in a matter in which it speaks by a large majority of its Representatives.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: That was not with respect to Wales.

Mr. BRYCE: The terms were such as to make it applicable to Wales. In 1877, referring indeed to Scotland, the present Duke of Devonshire said—

> "All I will say is that, whenever Scotch opinion, or even Scotch Liberal opinion, is fully formed on the subject of disestablishment, I think I may say, on behalf of the Liberal Party as a whole, that they will be prepared to deal with the question."

On those words we base ourselves, as being a declaration of the true principle which the House should follow in this case. The right hon. Member for West Bristol endeavoured to suggest that the right hon. Member for Midlothian had not been a party to our present action. Let me remind him that in 1891 the right hon. Member for Midlothian spoke in favour of a Motion for Welsh disestablishment, and cited the deliverance of the Duke of Devonshire, and was also a party to the Suspensory Bill of last year, in which the principle was as much involved as it is now. I am well aware that it is impossible to separate the question of the Welsh Church in the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite from the question of the Church of England. That is the real reason for their objection to this Bill. If it were a question of Wales alone they would feel that the case was immeasurably strong—[*Cries of* "No!" *and cheers*] — so much stronger than the case of Scotland. We have only to reflect that in Wales we have 31 out of 34 of the Representatives demanding disestablishment, and that the majority is increasing every Election. Wales, in respect of language, habits, ideas, and national character, in the very form of its religious services, is a country totally unlike England. It is unnecessary to claim Wales a nation in the sense that Ireland and Scotland are nations; but it is quite clear that Wales has a distinct character and religious feeling. As to the Church of England, I will say only this. In the first place, this Bill, if it be carried, will not in any respect injure any individual member of the Church of England. It will not destroy any communion which the Church has outside those four dioceses. It will not weaken the Church as an establishment. It was said in 1869 that the passing of disestablishment for Ireland must necessarily bring about disestabment in England. But, on the contrary, the Church of England is stronger now than it was in 1869. The idea of bit-by-bit disestablishment, of putting Wales on a level with Yorkshire or East Anglia, as some hon. Members have suggested, is at once dispelled by the reflection that all England is homogeneous in a sense in which Wales is not homogeneous with England. So far from religion suffering, I believe that religion and the Welsh Church will gain by this measure. I believe that always and everywhere it has been an injury to every Church of Christ to be established. And when the noble Lord the Member for West Edinburgh asks whether there was ever a Church started under the difficulties which the Welsh Church would have to encounter if that Church were suddenly disestablished, I will ask the noble Lord whether he does not, as a Scotch Member, know of a case in which a Church, for conscience sake, disestablished itself—of a case in which a Church came out without any previous provision at all, and which in the first year of its existence built 500 churches, raised £210,000 for church building and clergy, subscribed £60,000 for the building of schools and £100,000 for manses, and within the 47 years which have followed its disestablishment has spent £20,000,000 in support of its Creed? When I see such work done by a voluntary Church, by the zeal of its members, in which the real strength and life-blood of a Church must lie, I can have no fear for the Church of Wales. Twenty-five years ago this House was discussing the Bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and three prophecies were made. The first was that the Church of England would suffer, and that attacks would soon be made on it. That prophecy has been refuted.

Hon. Members are always claiming that the Church of England is stronger to-day than it has ever been. Then how can they say that it is in danger? It was also said that the effect of disestablishment would be to give the Roman Catholics an immense gain and advantage in Ireland. The boundaries of the two Creeds remain, I believe, absolutely unchanged from that time to now; there have been no changes either to the Roman Catholic or to the Episcopal Church, and both stand relatively where they were. Lastly, it was said that by disestablishment the Church itself would languish, and in many parishes expire, owing to the difficulty of maintaining it. We know that, on the contrary, the disestablished Church of Ireland has been re-invigorated by the process of the change of disestablishment; we know that the liberality of its members is far greater than it was when it was an Established Church. We know that they take far more interest in its government, and that a more keen and vital pulse of life beats through all its veins than in those days, and I venture to believe that what we are able to say now about the Irish Disestablished Church—which, I suppose, no man in this House would reverse—after a quarter of a century, those who come after us a quarter of a century hence will say about the Disestablished Church in Wales. They will see then a Church which is stronger, a Church which is subscribed to more liberally, and I hope they will see—and this is, perhaps, the one point on which all Members on both sides of the House can unite—if not unity, at any rate, a greater degree of harmonious co-operation and peaceful joint Christian work in Wales than is possible now. We believe that these are the results which will follow from this Bill, and it is because we are convinced that this will be no less for the peace and happiness of Wales than for the good of the Welsh Church itself that we bring forward this measure, commend it to the House as grounded on the principles of right and justice, and confidently trust to place it on the Statute Book.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) said, as one who represented in that House three of the threatened dioceses, he desired to say a few words upon this great question. They had asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the cathedrals were to be exclusively used for the purposes of the Church, and he had defended himself by saying they were to be used altogether for the whole people of Wales, which meant a great number and variety of sects, besides those who belonged to the Church. He declared that this movement was a secularist movement against all religion, urged on by men who had prohibited the Bible and its teaching in 70 of the schools of Wales, prohibited religious teaching in 150 schools, and endeavoured to strike out all religious teaching in the boarding houses of the intermediate schools. These were the people who proposed to nationalise the cathedrals. He asked the Government to realise the position Take the cathedral of St. Asaph, which was founded in the 6th century, and had been placed as a perpetual trust into the hands of the ordained ministers of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Churchmen had spent their substance upon beautifying and enlarging the fabric. In that cathedral was kept with zealous care the Welsh Bible translated by a Welsh Bishop, and daily a service, according to the ancient British use, had from time immemorial been celebrated in that cathedral. What gave to the fabric its beauty; what gave to the fabric and stone their historic perpetuity, their peculiar sanctity? It was their Christian ownership, which the Bill proposed to take away, because they were dedicated, not to the Babel of many sects, but exclusively to one true form of worship of Apostolic origin. Although backed up by all the Imperial power of the Empire they dare not touch a stone of a single mosque in the East, nor take those heathen temples from their heathen guardianship; did the Government think the Christian priesthood would quietly allow their sanctuaries to be taken from them? All they asked was equality of treatment, liberty of religious teaching, and liberty of religious worship, which were the birthright of Englishmen.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Asquith, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Bryce, and The Solicitor General.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 205.]

PAROCHIAL ELECTORS (REGISTRATION ACCELERATION) BILL.—(No. 175.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.*)

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he thought the House had a right to expect that some explanation of this Bill should be given, in order that they might be able to point out any difficulties in the way of the carrying out of the scheme adopted by the Government. As he understood, the plan of the Bill was to bring the Registers into operation on the 8th of November instead of at the time at presentfixed. It was obvious, therefore, that the necessary work would have to be accelerated. A great many functionaries were concerned, and he asked on behalf of those persons how the Government proposed to carry out that acceleration without any inconvenience? He hoped they would have some explanation.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) said, the hon. Member could not have been in the House when he introduced the Bill and explained its provisions about 10 days ago. The Second Reading was now proposed as the result of an agreement between the Leader of the Opposition and the Government. The Leader of the Opposition said that under certain conditions the Bill would be treated as a non-contentious measure, and those conditions had been complied with. The only effect would be to accelerate the parochial Register.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) said, he was not aware precisely of what passed between his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon this subject, but his impression was that the arrangement was that any Bill brought in merely to accelerate parochial registration in order that the elections should be held on November 8 should not be treated as a measure of a contentious character. But this Bill provided that the Register should not come into force until November 22, and the elections could not be held before December 1. Why could they not leave the law as it stood and allow the Register to come into force in the ordinary course on January 1, thus saving all trouble and expense? A more unnecessary proposal than that contained in the Bill he had never seen submitted to the judgment of the House. What could it matter to any parish whether the election took place five weeks earlier or later?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) said, the undertaking of the Leader of the Opposition was that if a Bill for the acceleration of the registration was brought in he would not treat it as contentious. Now the whole argument of the right hon. Baronet was that there should be no acceleration at all.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH said, the circumstances had changed.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) said, the only change was, the Register was to come into force a fortnight later than was originally proposed, and to say on that account that there should be no acceleration was not in accordance with the understanding come to.

Mr. W. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby) said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not taken the best course to secure the end he had in view. They had pointed out when the Parish Councils Bill was under discussion that it was impossible to bring the Register into force within the time named in it, and now the Chancellor of the Exchequer sought to blame them on that account.

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

DOGS BILL.—(No. 177.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. Gardner, Essex, Saffron Walden): This is not considered a contentious Bill. It is mainly a consolidation Bill. We have thought it necessary to bring it forward not on account of any serious excess of rabies, but because of such an increase during the last two or three years as has led to some anxiety. The few provisions which are of any novelty relate to matters of detail. If the House will read the Bill a second time now I propose to refer it to the Grand Committee on Law, where these details can be better discussed.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I do not object to the Government going to the dogs, but I must object to this Bill.

Second Reading deferred till Tomorrow.

QUARTER SESSIONS BILL [*Lords*]. (No. 162.)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress, 26th April.*]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir J. RIGBY, Forfar) said, this Bill was introduced into the other House for the purpose of doing away with the practical difficulty that arose by reason of the interference of Quarter Sessions with the Assizes. As long ago as 1834 a Bill was passed for the purpose of preventing interference with the Spring Assizes, but recently it had been found that there had been interference with other Assizes. The Bill proposed to adopt the machinery of the former Act, but it had been pointed out by gentlemen on both sides of the House that that machinery was deficient, and he therefore proposed to alter the first clause so as to make it provide that the Justices assembled in General Quarter Sessions or at any adjourned meeting thereof might at any time when it might appear desirable for the purpose of avoiding interference with the Assizes next ensuing fix or alter the time for holding the next General Quarter Sessions so that the Sessions should be held not earlier than 14 days before nor later than 14 days after the week in which they were now held.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, to leave out line 5.—(*Sir J. Rigby.*)

Question proposed, "That line 5 stand part of the Clause."

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he had not the slightest desire to oppose the Bill, but he would suggest that it would be very desirable that the duty should not be confined to the Quarter Sessions, but should be performed by a Joint Committee consisting partly of Magistrates and partly of members of the County Council.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, he could not find the Amendments on the Paper. He entirely objected to the taking of business at that time of night at all, but thought that the consideration at that hour of Amendments which were not on the Paper was especially objectionable. He moved to report Progress, with the view of having the Amendments printed. He was always suspicious of these lawyers' Bills, which generally meant extensions of legal monopolies and additional fees.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. A. C. Morton.*)

SIR J. RIGBY: I may point out that we have already passed all the Amendments except the merely verbal ones.

Question put, and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 15, to leave out all the words after the word "is," to the word "this," in line 18, and insert the words "hereby repealed."—(*Sir J. Rigby.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and negatived.

Question proposed, "That the words 'hereby repealed' be there inserted."

MR. A. C. MORTON: Mr. Mellor, did I not move to report Progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already put that Motion.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Mr. Mellor, may I ask if it is in Order to go on with contentious business after 12 o'clock.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no opposition.

MR. A. C. MORTON: I am opposed to the Amendment, Sir.

SIR J. RIGBY: These are merely words of definition.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: With the exception of the Solicitor General very few

Members know a single thing that has been done in regard to this Bill.

MR. A. C. MORTON said, he should like to know whether this contentious business could be proceeded with after 12 o'clock? He had always understood that if anybody moved to report Progress after 12 o'clock, Progress was reported as a matter of course. He wished to know whether he was in Order in again moving to report Progress?

*THE CHAIRMAN: When I put the Motion to report Progress the hon. Member did not challenge a Division, and I decline to put it again immediately afterwards.

Objection being taken to Further Proceedings, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.—(No. 148.)

Read the third time, and passed.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.—(No. 150.)

Read the third time, and passed.

Mr. T. W. Russell

SHOP HOURS ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 189.)

Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—(No. 10.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

DERELICT VESSELS (REPORTS) BILL. (No. 87.)

Read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under "The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861," relating to Collieston, Fraserburg, Polperro, and Whitelinks, ordered to be brought in by **Mr. Burt and Mr. Mundella.**

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 203.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock.

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(AUTHORISED EDITION).

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1R., 2R., 3R. Speech delivered on First, Second, or Third Reading.
Adj. Adjourned.

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